

LESSONS IN CHURCH HISTORY CLASS NOTES

By Paul Zeron

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PREFACE

These notes are not intended to be a full history of the church. As they are presented, they will cover critical events, issues, and doctrine that shaped church history and the development of the branches of church movements and denominations.

When teaching, there are lists that would be tedious to present in class. It is recommended to share highlights from the lists as needed but to direct students to be sure to read through them on their own.

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I. INTRODUCTION – THE STUDY OF CHURCH HISTORY

§1 People's negative perception of studying history is understandable if it is only reduced to a mere examination of dates and events that they can't relate to. However, history becomes far more interesting when we realize that it is not a haphazard collection of accidental happenings and reactions. History is not random. Instead, it is the result of influential ideas and powerful forces that have shaped and molded its course. It unfolds like a captivating drama, driving inevitably toward a *specific* outcome.

The Big Idea:
How to get into studying history

When we delve into church history, we are going to observe several key aspects that will help us appreciate its significance.

- Methodology – the principles that guide *how* we will study.
- The framework of church history – the way God organized church history will help us follow and track its progress.
- Spiritual affirmation – strengthening our own faith and relationship with God.
- Spiritual commitment – the challenge to our spiritual commitment.

1. Methodology

§2 Methodology refers to the underlying principles of how we organize our study. There are several principles that will guide our study and how we organize our understanding of church history.

- ***His* story**

Not just social evolution

§3 The first thing we want to recognize is that history is *His* story, or God's story. The word history itself refers simply to a recounting of events. But we look beyond the mere retelling to see God's purposes being fulfilled.

The Big Idea:
History is not random, it all fits into God's plans, not just random social evolution

§4 So, there are some things that are *not* the subject of our inquiry. History is not just a series of who conquered whom so that our present system is made up of merely the one whose armies prevailed. It is not the study of some inexorable social force of oppressed peoples finally achieving utopia. It is not driven by natural selection due to the survival of the technologically advanced. History is more than discovering the course that people took, exercising their power to sustain their survival. If you don't consider history with respect to how we relate to and serve God and His plan it will become as significant as the cycle of a food chain in nature.

Deconstructionism for rewriting history according to a Utopian agenda

§5 In contrast, The philosophy of Deconstructionism views history from the "bottom up" and supports a random evolution of history. As a method, deconstructionism seeks to break down an assumption into its parts to see what new and different assumptions might arise from those parts. Breaking an assumption down into its parts is not bad in itself. Because Deconstructionists have an agenda, they would break down a Formula 1 Race Car into its parts and put it back together to make a riding lawnmower. They believe that there is no one interpretation of history that is correct. They seek to break down the understanding of history into the components that shaped it so that multiple interpretations are possible. Deconstructionism applied to history is founded on the politics of envy seeking to find a way to reorder society to fit their unrealistic view of man being naturally cooperative.

§6 The primary concern of the Deconstructionist, today, is to first eliminate any clear conclusions about history because what they really want is to destroy what they think is the latest evolution of oppression. They want to rewrite history so they can fit it to their own agenda. Next, they look for ambiguities and contradictions. They never come to any real conclusions so that their study can be used to justify anything, no matter how self-contradictory or unrealistic their notions are. Examples include people like:

§7 Karl Marx, who argued that historical change is primarily driven by the struggles and conflicts between social classes. [An evolution of the most powerful]

Herbert Spencer, an English philosopher and sociologist, who emphasized the influence of social forces, evolutionary processes, and gradual societal developments.

Anna Julia Cooper, an African-American scholar, activist, and educator, who viewed history from a feminist and racial perspective. She argued that history often overlooks the contributions and agency of marginalized groups, particularly women and people of color, by focusing exclusively on exceptional male figures.

§8 Howard Zinn, an American historian and social activist, who emphasized the importance of studying the experiences and struggles of ordinary people, social movements, and collective (or Marxist) actions in understanding historical change. Zinn's work, in particular, has been the most influential in reinterpreting American history, spinning a false impression, for example, of *American Exceptionalism* [where God's providential hand is recognized]. In *A Peoples History of the United States*, he argued that the history of the United States was not one of unbridled progress and constant improvement, but rather a history marked by systemic...exploitation of marginalized communities. By misquoting, overgeneralizing, distortion, and biased interpretation, he reduced the key role of America in the most recent Biblical dispensation. Instead, he saw America as a cabal of greedy, self-serving elites, doomed to pave the way for a Marxist utopia. **Unfortunately leftists have succeeded in making him the foundation of social study in schools in our times.**

(See especially: <https://claremontreviewofbooks.com/the-disgraceful-howard-zinn/>)

§9 Deconstructionism is the method of conspiracy theorists who seek to find some alternative explanation for existing power structures. American Exceptionalism is far more viable because it is especially attributable to God's plan.

The Great Man Theory of the progress of history

§10 Neither does history progress by the *Great Man Theory*, which is a little more realistic. The *Great Man Theory* suggests that history is moved forward by numerous (but random) contingencies punctuated by great men who bring a great leap in social development.

Church history is not a tool to establish denominational supremacy

§11 Church history is *not* about a chauvinistic reinforcement of a superior tribal mentality that is used to dominate other denominations. We are all bumbling through, doing our best to get the job of evangelism done while at the same time keeping in mind what problems others have stepped into. All of this is on the way to the Millennial Kingdom.

God is Sovereign over history

§12 The Biblical Christian view sees history as managed by God Who is sovereign over history.

Isa 46:9-10 Remember the former things of old: for I *am* God, and *there is* none else; I *am* God, and *there is* none like me,

10 Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times *the things* that are not *yet* done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure:

Prov 21:1 The king's heart *is* in the hand of the LORD, *as* the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.

Dan 4:35 And all the inhabitants of the earth *are* reputed as nothing: and he doeth according to his will in the army of heaven, and *among* the inhabitants of the earth: and none can stay his hand, or say unto him, What doest thou?

Ps 33:10-11 The LORD bringeth the counsel of the heathen to nought: he maketh the devices of the people of none effect.

11 The counsel of the LORD standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations.

§13 The marvelous aspect of God's sovereignty over history is not that He has worked mankind as a puppet to act out what He has designed, but that, in spite of our free will and the part we play as willful creatures, He has carried out His plan for salvation and the fulfillment of His plans. Some regard this as a diminished view of God's sovereignty, but others see this as an elevated view since God's sovereignty is not just carried out, but that He is sovereign *in spite* of what man or demon can do.

§14 This is why history has been called *His story*, or the reporting of God's

interaction with man to restore his relationship with God. This is what is known as the *teleological view of history*. It is based on The Greek word "telos" (τέλος) and carries the meaning of "end," "purpose," "goal," or "completion." It is derived from the root "telo" which signifies bringing something to its intended or ultimate conclusion. In this view, it is recognized that all the events of history are by God's design to reach a certain end. We look at history "telescopically" to see where it is headed to compare it to the History is moving towards a divine plan or a final judgment, where all things will be reconciled and the purpose of creation will be fulfilled. This is seen especially in Gal 4:4 and Eph 1:10. God had a plan that He kept to for bringing Jesus into the world, and He has a plan when all the dispensations are fulfilled to bring His entire creation forward into eternity.

Gal 4:4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

• ***Our story***

§15 While history should be viewed as the story of God's redemptive relationship with man, there is the complimentary side of that relationship which is *our* story. As Paul approached the end of his ministry, he wrote this admonition to Timothy:

The Big Idea:
Studying church history will help us know where we fit in and how we got here.

2Tim 2:1-2 Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus.

2And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

Church history is a record of the commitment of God's word and work from generation to generation. The emphasis on church history is not just the narrative of *what* happened, but the end result of the historical events.

§16 There are two benefits that emerge: the confessional (what we believe) and the practical (how we organize to serve God).

The constitution of the church is made up of what it believes and how it is organized to carry out the mission of the church. This will help us to see how we became differentiated from other churches. We will look at the argumentation throughout history that defines us according to a typical breakdown in systematic theology:

Bibliology
Theology Proper
Pneumatology

Christology
Anthropology
Harmartiology

Soteriology
Ecclesiology
Eschatology

In our practical studies, we will look at how churches operated. This will help us in the way *we* organize and how we engage with churches and culture today.

• **Environmental influences**

§17 Along the way in church history, there are environmental influences that will also come to bear on the development of church history.

Technological influences: Such things as the Roman infrastructure and the invention of the printing press with movable type have affected the direction of church growth.

Philosophical pressures: Platonism, Aristotelianism, Scholasticism, Augustinianism, Gnosticism, Rationalism, Romanticism, and much more have been used to attempt to organize and interpret truth which have given rise to theological dispute.

Social/Political forces: people groups and classes vying for power have imposed their ambitions on church history. The use of governmental organization, hierarchy, and sponsorship has shaped the conflict of church history.

Geo-political influences: The natural boundaries and movement beyond those boundaries has affected the restriction and expansion of church activity through the Middle East, Europe, and then in America.

Ecclesiastical powers: the politics and practical operation of church ministry would especially affect centralization vs. decentralized models of church polity.

• **Devotional considerations**

§18 A study of church history is also a study of the men who created the history. Much can be gained devotionally as we consider what they experienced and how their faith and devotion were strengthened. However, in this study, we will be looking at individual's lives primarily to see the development of churches over time.

• **Limitations**

§19 There is so much information available for our consideration that it might seem like we run the risk of overlooking critical factors that shaped church history. However, the flow of history can be easily recognized to lesser *or* greater detail. We will be looking at key

The Big Idea:

There will be many things we won't have time to get into, but we will cover those things that are the most critical. Be sure to do other reading.

moments as they have been recognized by many scholars which will make it easier as you reflect on how we arrived to what we see in churches today. You might do other reading (p. 16) that will give you a richer appreciation for the arguments and battles that have been fought to bring us to the convictions we have today.

§20 We must always keep in mind that the purpose of our study is not to prove doctrine as if church history is authoritative and prescriptive. Some use church history to say "This is what has always been believed," or "This is what has been believed by so many, so we should believe it also." History is only used to see how people interacted with each other. The test for what is to be believed is what we find in the Bible.

• **Discerning patterns**

§21 Once we see that history is according to God's plan, we are able to discern patterns of recurring themes in history. Because of this, we can establish the more significant issues that we should be wary of. These patterns include:

The conflict of the kingdoms: The kingdom of the world vs. the kingdom of God

Confusing salvation and sanctification

Compromise and reaffirmation

Intellect vs. Emotion

Biblicism vs. Innovations

It is very important to emphasize that these themes will *constantly* be at play throughout church history. If you want to understand what was going on, look for these themes.

The conflict of the kingdoms: The kingdom of the world vs. the kingdom of God

§22 The subject of our inquiry will fit primarily within the scope of the conflict of the Kingdom(s) of the World and the Kingdom of God. God draws a distinction between these two kingdoms in:

Christ's temptation at the beginning of His ministry,

The Big Idea:

The conflict of the kingdoms is the most significant principle. The largest part of church history will revolve around the local vs. the universal church (before the Millennium).

Matt 4:8-10 Again, the devil taketh him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9And saith unto him, All these things will I give thee, if thou wilt fall down and worship me.

10Then saith Jesus unto him, Get thee hence, Satan: for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.

§23 Since the before the Tower of Babel through the kingdoms Daniel prophesied and now the globalism that the Antichrist will step into, Satan has been trying to establish his power over the kingdoms of the world.

Christ's kingdom stands in stark contrast as the only true kingdom.

Christ's defense before Pilate,

John 18:36 Jesus answered, 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.

The events of the Crucifixion were one of the two highest moments of the conflict of the kingdom. The other will be at the Seventh Trumpet when God pours out His Vial Judgments that precede the Battle of Armageddon:

Rev 11:15 And the seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.

§24 *The world* is not just a reference to the earth (*ge*). It refers to an ordered domain (*kosmos*) that is characterized as evil in this present world-age (*aion*) by its world-administration (*oikumene*, where we get the word ecumenical from for a world wide single church). Paul speaks of the conflict between the current evil world and the Kingdom of Heaven in Ephesians 2.

Eph 2:1-7 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins; 2Wherein in time past ye walked according to the **course [aion-current age or epoch]** of this world [**kosmos-the ordered world, not just the earth**], according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:

3Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath, even as others. [**We were serving in the kingdom of this world.**]

4But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, 5Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)

6And hath raised *us* up together, and made *us* sit together in heavenly *places* [**ouranos-heavenlies**] in Christ Jesus: [**whose heavenly kingdom we currently abide in**]

7That in the ages to come [**aion-the future age which will be the final fulfillment in the kingdom to come**] he might shew the exceeding riches of *his* grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

§25 This kingdom conflict is represented by man's efforts to organize the world vs. God's method of organizing. Man seeks to centralize power and authority in an elite power base. God organizes according to individual responsibility with each one primarily responsible to God. His kingdom is present with us through personal responsibility. Instead of looking for that kingdom to come, it is already in the hearts of the believers.

Luke 17:20-21 And when he was demanded of the Pharisees, when the kingdom of God should come, he answered them and said, The kingdom of God cometh not with observation:

21Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.

§26 When the world mixes with the church it seeks to establish a denomination, patriarchy, or a papacy for centralization. Denominations do this by creedalism (p. 212), or authority based on adherence to a creed or a statement of faith. The patriarchies and papacy do this based on sacramentalism vested in a succession of leaders descending from the apostles.

Even though Baptists properly promote independence and personal responsibility before God, there are some who are still tempted to establish a sense of legitimacy through conformity. They do this by claiming a succession of churches.

§27 Church history is not about the conflict between Baptists and denominational/patriarchal churches. This would eliminate not just a small number of groups for consideration. The problem is that of all the groups that you might want to definitely include as Baptists, or at least Baptist, many of them might have doctrinal stands that we would not want to be associated with. Although studying Baptist History is very profitable, by referring to Baptist History there is a suggestion that Baptists can be rigidly defined. In spite of the fact that there is a set of principles, or distinctives (p. 204), that have been associated with Baptists, one thing that is consistent with actual Baptists is that they resist being defined by anything that has the appearance of being a creed. Even when they use a creed, they consistently hold that a creed is only helpful, but not binding.

§28 Baptists have insisted on Biblicalism. Their authority has been derived not by adherence to a creed or by being the bearers of sacraments, but from the authority of Scripture. Church history should not be limited to Baptist history. This would pose a theoretical difficulty because a rigid definition of Baptists is the very thing that Baptists resist. If you make the definition too strict, you run the risk of creedalism and excluding some churches which were not part of the creedal/sacramental systems. If you make the definition too loose, you end up including churches in history that we would criticize and not approve of for fellowship today.

§29 We do not deceive ourselves into thinking that we can take over the world's seats of power and have everyone marvel at how right we are. It is not as though we think that the Kingdom of God will *never* be victorious, just not by us. The Kingdom of God will only be *ultimately* victorious when Jesus comes back to set all things right in the Millennium.

§30 A more efficient definition of the historical conflict during the church age is

between the state/universal/official churches and *independent* churches. The state/universal/official churches are represented by denominations or patriarchies (p. 119) which promoted centralized control of churches. The independent churches are represented by various movements (even today) but especially by Baptists.

§31 The drama of church history, then, is a study of the struggle between the Kingdom of the World (*kosmos*) vs. the Kingdom of God (*ouranos*). It should be duly noted that when reference to "the church" is made, it is being used generically. It is to be understood as referring to any given church and refers to "the churches" of each age.

Confusing Salvation with Sanctification

§32 Having a false theology of salvation lies at the foundation of what it means to be a Christian. While the Kingdom conflict was between two worlds, the soteriological issue was more of an internal dispute within the churches. Because it was a foundational issue, it would

necessarily cause a division between churches. What created the issue was the struggle church leaders had with the problem of sinful practice after salvation. Whether you made sanctification part of salvation or not was the problem. This could lead to a such views as

- Antinomianism (against the law) where the moral law becomes irrelevant
- Legalism where salvation becomes dependent on behavior
- Sacramentalism and the difference between *opera operantum* (one's works are effective without any heart attitude or repentance) and *opera operantis* (one's works are effective depending on the heart of the one who performs the works)
- ...and others

§33 The question *should not* be how one's sanctification affects one's salvation. Having a careful view of eternal security, salvation by faith, the spirit, soul, and body, it is then possible to properly apply sanctification. This is one of the most common foundational teachings that is dealt with in ministry even today.

Consider some of these views of Martin Luther, Philip Melancthon, John Agricola, and George Major who were contemporary German figures of the Reformation (Newman, 216-217)

- Luther: "Christ is not harsh, severe, biting as Moses...Therefore, **away with Moses forever**, who shall not terrify deluded hearts...The gospel is heavenly and divine, the law, earthly and human; the righteousness of the gospel is just as distinct from that of the law as heaven from earth, as light from darkness. The gospel is light and day, the law darkness and night." Luther moderated his view especially as others had extreme responses to it.

The Big Idea:

Confusing salvation with sanctification will be a primary problem in soteriology and orthodoxy.

- Agricola: from *18 Antinomian Theses*
Faith alone justifies, and works are not necessary for salvation.
Believers are not required to pray the Lord's Prayer or practice any religious rituals.
The Law's purpose was only to reveal the impossibility of fulfilling it. [The Law still serves as a guide]
Christians are exempt from the consequences of sin and need not fear punishment.
The Law does not apply to Christians as a means of justification or salvation.
The Law is not necessary for Christians but rather hinders faith and sanctification.
Preachers should not use the Law in their sermons.
The Law reveals only God's wrath and judgment, not His will for believers.
The Law only accuses and terrifies, but cannot lead to repentance.
The Law's primary function is to expose sin, but believers are not accountable to it.
Believers are free from any obligation to follow the moral commandments of the Law.
Believers are not bound to confess their sins or seek forgiveness from God.
Good works do not please God or bring any benefit to believers.
The Law has no authority over believers because they are dead to the Law.
Christians are not required to obey civil laws or submit to secular authorities.
Believers are completely free and have no obligations except to love one another.
The Law is abolished for Christians, and they are under the rule of the Gospel alone.
- Melancthon: Melancthon was a great moderating force in Lutheranism who became more and more decided in his teaching with regard to the importance of the law and the necessity of practical morals in the Christian system. **He made good works a condition, or *causa sine qua non*, of salvation, and insisted upon a certain degree of freedom of will in man.**
- Major: **"While good works do not merit salvation, they are the necessary fruit of faith, their absence being a sure sign that faith is dead."**

Compromise and reaffirmation

§34 Church history is not a study of any particular church or denomination. It is based on Biblical theology. In the conflict between the centralizing efforts and the efforts to maintain a *Biblical* concept of church organization there has been a dynamic of doctrinal corruption and recovery through reaffirmation of Biblical authority.

§35 As churches and church movements progress in history, they are prone to corruption. Even if a church is headed by a Godly and effective pastor or church leadership, there is no guarantee that subsequent leadership will not devolve into corruption. When any such corrupt church be propped up by being the "official church"

The Big Idea:
Corrupt doctrine becomes
e n t r e n c h e d t h r o u g h
instituionalization

then error becomes institutionalized. You would be surprised at how some popes attempted reform only to be followed by corrupt popes. Church history becomes the struggle for churches to separate from the old in order to reaffirm good doctrine.

§36 When it is merely an independent church gone bad, though, the struggle is not noticed or probably not even recorded in history. The struggle becomes noticeable when it is a reforming group in conflict with an official church which has the power to persist. Even in the early church, the struggle was to maintain purity of faith as groups attempted to dominate in the new Dispensation of Grace and the church age.

Intellect vs. Emotion

§37 When you read the debates that have gone back and forth between Christian leaders it can be said that many times they provided "more heat than light," and that their passion out-paced their proofs.

§38 Over the course of church history there are swings back and forth between emotional and intellectual trends as Christianity responded to the excesses of each (see the chart on p. 15). Devotion, passion, and mysticism vs. more philosophical perspectives marked the trends in thinking.

The Big Idea:
There needs to be a balance
between intellect and emotion.
Excesses cause the pendulum to
swing back and forth.

- Montanists were characterized by prophetic ecstasy and an emphasis on miraculous spiritual gifts. Descriptions of the Montanists sound like the modern day Charismatic movement.
- Gnosticism was a dualistic philosophy that saw the immaterial spirit world as good and the material physical world as evil. They applied their philosophical speculations to Christianity.
- Monasticism developed as a way to get closer to God through study and ascetic practice.
- Scholasticism responded to the abuse of dogmatic pronouncements with an attempt to use logical reasoning to justify doctrine. The abuse of logic (especially with speculative premises) and hair splitting tended to tedious and ponderous argumentation.
- Mysticism arose as a reaction to the drudgery of Scholasticism.
- The Reformation not only sought to return to good theology but also tended to systemize theology. However, credalism exerted its control on religious expression.
- German Pietism and British Methodism brought people back into an emphasis on personal faith, practice, and a relationship with God.
- The Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy arose in response to the apostasy and skepticism that grew out of the abandonment of certainty in doctrine and German Higher Criticism.
- Although the Charismatic movement with its speaking in tongues and new

revelation given in prophesying is not the dominant theology of our time, its emphasis on the experiential is pervasive.

§39 For example, in a criticism of the New Apostolic Reformation, a movement within charismatic or pentecostal churches, there is a common statement of our time that shows how recognized the problem of *emotional experience vs. the intellect* problem is:

The New Apostolic Reformation, or NAR, is an unbiblical religious movement **that emphasizes experience over Scripture, mysticism over doctrine, and modern-day "apostles" over the plain text of the Bible.** Of particular distinction in the New Apostolic Reformation are the role and power of spiritual leaders and miracle-workers, the reception of "new" revelations from God, an over-emphasis on spiritual warfare, and a pursuit of cultural and political control in society. The seeking of signs and wonders in the NAR is always accompanied by blatantly false doctrine. – www.gotquestions.org/New-Apostolic-Reformation.html

§40 We are called to do some reality-checking as we study. We can be susceptible to an overemphasis on the emotional *or* the intellectual.

Consider this "new-agey" statement emphasizing the mystical and the emotional:

The Big Idea:
We need to do some reality checking on how we are influenced by intellect *and* emotion.

The goal of supercharged waveforms is to plant the seeds of manna rather than dogma. We exist as transmissions. Consciousness consists of atomic ionization of quantum energy. "Quantum" means an evolving of the primordial.

We are being called to explore the planet itself as an interface between passion and consciousness. Our conversations with other seekers have led to a blossoming of supra-consciousness-expanding consciousness. We are at a crossroads of energy and dogma. We are in the midst of an internal redefining of gratitude that will become our stepping-stone to the world itself.

Science requires exploration. Will is a constant. To embark on the story is to become one with it.

Have you found your story? It can be difficult to know where to begin. If you have never experienced this quantum leap inherent in nature, it can be difficult to heal.

Reality has always been radiating adventurers whose bodies are opened by synchronicity. Although you may not realize it, you are unrestricted. How should you navigate this eternal world? Child, look within and ground yourself.

This might sound like it is supposed to be saying something significant, but it was produced by a random phrase generator. Seb Pearce, the author says:

There were the occasional commenters, both positive and negative, who thought that the generator was created to poke fun at New Agey people, or even spirituality in

general. That's not the case at all.

§41 The reason I made it was to demonstrate how easy it is to fool our brains with this fact-free, emotionally-charged language that tries to bypass our rational thinking. My hope was to encourage more skepticism of this kind of discourse, and of the many charlatans who use it to pervert the human desire for transcendence and take advantage of vulnerable people for personal gain.

The same problem exists on the other side of the spectrum in the intellectual. This piece of nonsense was produced by artificial intelligence based on a list of phrases produced by a random academic phrase generator. The query for the AI generator was: "Could you write an essay about the ontology of God that includes these words? Future-proofed needs-based emulation, reverse-engineered modular instruction set, and polarized directional capability"

§42 In contemplating the ontology of God, it becomes crucial to examine the idea of a future-proofed divine entity. The term "future-proofed" implies a state of being that transcends the temporal limitations of human comprehension. If we envision God as an eternal being, existing beyond the confines of time, it can be argued that God possesses a future-proofed nature. This divine characteristic signifies the capacity to comprehend the past, present, and future simultaneously, untethered by the constraints of linear time.

Considering the concept of a needs-based emulation within the ontology of God requires a closer examination of divine attributes and their relationship to human needs. While human beings often have needs that must be fulfilled for their well-being, the idea of a needs-based emulation implies that God's actions and intentions are driven by a profound understanding of the needs of all creation. God, being omniscient, possesses an inherent awareness of the requirements and aspirations of sentient beings, thereby providing a comprehensive emulation of needs that promotes harmony and fulfillment.

§43 The notion of a reverse-engineered modular instruction set offers an intriguing perspective when contemplating the ontology of God. In this context, the term "reverse-engineered" implies an analytical approach to deciphering the intricate design and functioning of the divine. By contemplating the complexity of the universe and its interconnectedness, one may postulate that the divine ontology encompasses a modular instruction set. This implies that God's design and operations can be understood as a system composed of interconnected components, each serving a specific purpose and contributing to the overarching cosmic order.

Exploring the polarized directional capability of God requires an examination of divine attributes such as omnipotence and omniscience. The term "polarized" suggests a dichotomy or duality, indicating that God possesses the capability to navigate opposing directions or polarities. In this context, it can be argued that God's directional capability encompasses both transcendent and immanent aspects, allowing the divine to simultaneously exist beyond creation while being intimately involved within it.

§44 There are plenty of false doctrines that have required a large response and so we should appreciate the vast body of apologetic Christian literature. At the same time we must remember that some false teachings that have become embedded even in orthodox Christianity today might sound very intellectual because of all the books that have been written to support their arguments. We should not be impressed by the great volume of literature they have produced because it could be argued that it takes a lot of sophistry

to support a false doctrine.

The two illustrations above are best described by Prov 10:19 and Eccl 5:2-3

Prov 10:19 In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin: but he that refraineth his lips *is* wise.

Eccl 5:2-3 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter *any* thing before God: for God *is* in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

3For a dream cometh through the multitude of business; and a fool's voice *is known* by multitude of words.

If you want to have a little fun you can play with a random phrase generator at phrasegenerator.com/academic

Biblicalism vs. Innovations

§45 A terrible accusation in history was to refer to someone as an "innovationist." An innovationist could be someone who made up new doctrine that had no basis in Scripture, but it especially referred to someone who brought up doctrine that was contrary to the established orthodoxy at the time. In the spirit of the conflict between compromise and reaffirmation, the Bible would be the chief source that would justify those accused of innovation. The difference was between corruption of existing doctrine and completely new doctrine or practice being added. Bible translation, the use of philosophy to create alternate theology, laity receiving both bread and wine, and the sale of indulgences are examples of innovative efforts. Bible translations and communion of both kinds are not innovations, but in their day they were considered to be new innovations. At the heart of all the disputes throughout church history was the argument of the role of the Word of God. Through the introduction of philosophy, political expediency, and emotionalism, "supplementary" notions were introduced into theology. The counter at every turn was to seek to get back to the Bible and what is actually said in the Bible.

Emotional vs. Intellectual Trends

Emphasis on Emotion

Emphasis on Intellect

Montanism	2nd c.	
	2nd-3rd c.	Gnosticism
Monasticism	3rd-10th c.	
	11th-14th c.	Scholasticism
Mysticism	14th-15th c.	
	16th-17th c.	Reformation Orthodoxy
Pietism and Methodism	17th-18th c.	
	19th-20th c.	Fundamentalism/ Modernism
Charismatic	20th c. -	

• Recommended Reading and Bibliography

- The Anatomy of a Hybrid* – www.gospeltruth.net/verduin/hybrid.htm
- A History of the Baptists* (Thomas Armitage) – in two volumes (available for free as an Acrobat file from smallchurchsos.com)
amazon.com/dp/B09JY6HTM7
amazon.com/dp/B09JY4R6CZ
- A Manual of Church History* (Albert Newman) – in two volumes (available for free as an Acrobat file from smallchurchsos.com)
amazon.com/dp/B0C5PJFRT7
amazon.com/dp/B0C7JFWYR3
- A History of Fundamentalism in America* (George Dollar) – order from smallchurchsos.com
- A History of the Churches* (David Cloud) –
wayoflife.org/publications/books/history_of_the_churches.php
- A Concise History of the Baptists* (G.H. Orchard) – (available for free as an Acrobat file from smallchurchsos.com)
amazon.com/dp/B0C2S1JHF8
- Nicene and Post-Nicene Church Fathers, Series 2* (NPNF2, Philip Schaff) – available at
ccel.org/index/author/S
- The Foundation Of Augustinian–Calvinism* (Ken Wilson) available at
amazon.com/Foundation-Augustinian-Calvinism-Ken-Wilson/dp/108280035X
- History Of The Christian Church, Complete Eight Volumes In One* (Philip Schaff)
- Two Babylons* (Alexander Hyslop)
archive.org/details/theTwoBabylons

2. The Framework of Church History

• The organization of church ages

By identifying the issues that dominated the time period of each church age, we can organize our understanding of the stages of church history as it progressed.

§46 Just for the sake of interpreting Scripture, we have to understand the words in a passage according to the way the original audience in their day understood it. The understanding of the words *church*, *salvation*, and *baptism* have been affected by history so that people of Biblical times would think us a little strange in the way different denominations use them today.

§47 As we look at each church age, we will see how people of that age understood doctrine. With examination, it becomes apparent that popular notions of each age affected what people believed. For example, in the pre-Civil War *South*, people's interpretation of the Bible was carried on the tide of popular opinion in favor of slavery. In Medieval times, churches' interpretation was carried on the tide of popular opinion for the divine right of kings. In the late 1800s as Marxist teaching became popular, the Bible was interpreted to favor the tide of opinion for the Social Gospel which replaced evangelism with saving people from poverty.

§48 As is commonly said, "A rising tide floats all boats." As we examine church history, we will see tidal shifts that dominate in each church age. Just as a politician or a comedian will "read" the room, or as you listen to someone to get a "read" on what they are about, we need to read church history with an eye to "get a read" on tidal movements of opinion in each era.

We have to be sensitive to detect if our teachings, today, are influenced by the tide of what is trending in theological opinion.

One of the difficulties of any field of study or profession is having to master lists of details. This is true whether you are a pharmacist or a mechanic. In studying history, one of the difficulties is all the dates that are involved. By grouping them in church ages we get a read on what was trending and how the tide of opinion affected church movements to get where we are today.

We will not be looking at every date possible. We *will* take note of *key* dates that mark the dating of different eras when they began and ended to understand the major shifts in thinking that affected the direction of church movements.

• Comparing the Ages

§49 Although historians are pretty much in agreement about how historical events and issues are grouped into ages, it is important to note that there are variations in dating. There are also different groups according to each historian's perspective. This will depend on whether he is a secular historian, church historian, or a Fundamentalist. Within each system, the variation is due to how scholars treat the turning points in history. The Church Ages Chart (page 21) provides a comparison of the World Ages, Church Ages (as commonly taught), and Seven Church ages as recognized by Dispensationalism (p. 236).

§50 Secular history recognizes four time periods. Church historians usually recognize five. There are seven ages described in the Revelation. With all historians, there is variation in the way they categorize time periods because they are reflected by broad generalizations.

World Ages

1. Classical Antiquity (8thc. BC to the Fall of the Western Roman Empire 476 AD)
2. The Middle Ages
 - Dark/Early Middle Age 476 (Fall of Rome) -1054
 - High Middle Age 1054 (The Great Schism) -1309
 - Late Middle Age 1309 (Babylonian Captivity of the Church and decline of the papacy) -1500 (Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire and Constantinople 1453)
Renaissance
3. Modern Age
 - Early 1500-mid 1700s
Reformation
 - Late mid 1700s-1890
Enlightenment
Revolution
Industrial Revolution

4. Contemporary
 - Modernism 1890-1950
 - Post-Modernism 1950-

Church Ages (as commonly taught)

§51 Church historians will characterize the eras a little differently from secular historians and even among themselves. The ways *secular* historians and *church* historians organize the eras of history are, nevertheless, pretty much the same. The Church Ages that are commonly taught are similar to the World Ages but also give extra emphasis to important church events.

1. Apostolic Age 30-100
2. Patristic Age 100-476
 - Ante-Nicene – to the Council of Nicea 325
 - Nicene
 - Rise of the Papacy*
 - 380 Emperor Gratian makes Damasus, Pontifex Maximus
 - 452 Leo I Declared Pope/Universal Bishop
 - newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Leo_I
 - Post-Nicene – to 476
3. Medieval Church Age 476-1453 (Fall of Rome, Fall of Constantinople)
 - Early Middle Age 476-800
 - High Middle Age 800-1300
 - Charlemagne and the Holy Roman Empire 800*
 - Great Schism 1054*
 - Crusades 1096-1129*
 - Decline of Holy Roman Empire 1100-*
 - Decay of Medieval Catholicism 1100-1300*
 - Late Middle Age 1300-1450
 - "Babylonian Captivity" of the papacy in France 1309-1376*
 - Fall of Constantinople 1453*
4. Modern Age 1453-1950
 - Early Modern - 1400 to 1750
 - Renaissance 1400-1500 (roughly)*
 - Reformation 1517-1648 (95 Theses to the Peace of Westphalia)*
 - Enlightenment 1650-1815 (Ending with Napoleonic Wars 1815)*
 - Late Modern 1750-1950
 - Great Awakenings 1730-1800*
 - Pentecostalism 1901*
 - Fundamentalism 1920*
 - New Evangelicalism 1948*
5. Contemporary Age 1950-

The Seven Churches of the Revelation

The ages of the Seven Churches of the Revelation are also similar to the time frames of World Ages and Church Ages. It differs in the way the Patristic Age and Modern Ages were treated (each split in two).

§52 We are going to look at church history as presented in the seven churches of the Revelation. The chronological organization of church history can be divided along various lines. In the last two eras in the Church Ages Chart (p. 21) each category is negotiable because we aren't allowed to determine or know when the Second Coming of Christ occurs.

The use of the Seven Churches of the Revelation as a scheme for church history gives us the benefit of a sense of closure and completeness. Those who see the Revelation from a Preterist's View are left hanging after the close of the New Testament with an indeterminate future. Preterism has been used to suggest that the work of the church will continue until Christ appears to take His throne in a world the church has prepared for Him.

Genesis presents the fall of man and the corruption of God's creation while a Futurist's view of the Revelation presents the restoration of man and God's creation. The Seven Churches are not accidental, but fit teleologically (the doctrine of design and purpose) as a link from the time of the Old Testament dispensations to the final Millennial dispensation.

The Seven Churches as church ages fit in contextually with the Revelation as the apocalyptic vision of the future. They are not a mere add on as if John was giving an irrelevant "shout out" to his "homeys." They *can* provide spiritual applications. As prophetic Scripture, they have an immediate *and* a future application. Each church is presented distinctly with a finality so that the Laodicean age is not left open ended as if it continues on into the Tribulation. This is why the church is not referenced again until the Marriage supper of the Lamb. These church ages are understood in a Dispensational (p. 236) context as the sixth Dispensation of Grace where the Church age is given by God's grace instead of going directly from the Dispensation of the Law to the Dispensation of the Millennial Reign.

The Seven Churches of the Revelation (or of Asia)

1. Ephesus 30-100, The Church that Lost Its First love
False teachers waste no time appearing in churches
2. Smyrna 100-300, The Suffering Church
A period of 10 persecutions but a church that stands by its convictions
3. Pergamos 300-450, The Compromised Church (with the seat of Satan)
The High Priesthood, or Pontifex Maximus, is transferred to the church and the church stands by political convenience
4. Thyatira 450-1500, The Tolerant Church (Mystery Religions accommodated)
The religious and political whoredom of *Jezebel* are dominant in a universal church
5. Sardis 1500-mid 1750, The Dead Church
The Reformation fractures the universal church into smaller copies of itself and ends in dead creedalism (p. 212)
6. Philadelphia mid 1750-mid to late 1900s, The Revival Church

With a proper church/state relationship of separation and the end of empowerment of one church over another, churches thrived

7. Laodicea mid to late 1900s-, The Lukewarm Church

In the final phase of this Dispensation (p. 236), mankind ultimately proves his irresponsibility. In spite of all that God has given him that God's judgment and grace are vindicated and fulfilled in the Tribulation to follow.

• **Significant dates**

§53 There is no need for anyone to be fearful of history being about memorizing dates. For our need, only some key dates are beneficial. These dates are usually events that accompany when church ages begin and end or some major change takes place. Other dates will be noticed, but it will be generally more important to know what age events belong to. Key dates and events will include:

31 – Pentecost

100 – Death of John

313 - Edict of Milan, Constantine declares end of Christian persecution

449 - Leo I claims Petrine Supremacy

476 - Fall of the Western Roman Empire, Middle Ages/Medieval times begin

606 - Gregory the Great unifies Roman Catholicism

800 - Crowning of Charlemagne, beginning of Holy Roman Empire

1054 - Great Schism between Roman and Orthodox churches

1453 - Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire (alternate end of the Middle Ages)

1517 - Recognized beginning of the Protestant Reformation with the presentation of Luther's 95 Theses, End of the Middle Ages

1648 - Peace of Westphalia/End of the Protestant Reformation, Beginning of Enlightenment

1730 - First Great Awakening

1750 - Second Great Awakening

1815 - Napoleonic Wars, End of Enlightenment

1890 Modern Age

1890 Modernism

1920 Fundamentalism

1950 Post-Modernism

	World Ages	Church Ages	Seven Churches Ages
0	1. Classical Antiquity 8th c. BC- -476 AD		
50		1. Apostolic 30-100	1. Ephesus 30-100
100		Patristic 2. Ante-Nicene 100-325	2. Smyrna 100-300
150			
200		2. Post-Nicene 325-476	3. Pergamos 300-450
250			
300			
350			
400	Middle Ages 2. Dark/Early Middle 476-1054	Medieval 3. Early Middle Age 476-800	4. Thyatira 450-1500
500			
550			
600			
650			
700			
750			
800		3. High Middle Age 800-1300	
850			
900			
950	2. High Middle 1054-1309		
1000			
1050	3. Late Middle Age 1300-1450		
1100			
1150			
1200			
1250	2. Late Middle 1309-1517		
1300			
1350	Modern 4. Early Modern 1450-1750	5. Sardis 1500-1750	
1400			
1450			
1500			
1550	Modern 3. Early Modern 1517-1750		
1600			
1650	3. Late Modern 1750-1890	6. Philadelphia 1750-1950	
1700			
1750			
1800	Contemporary 4. Modernism 1890-1945	4. Late Modern 1750-1945	
1850			
1890	4. Post-Modernism 1945-	5. Contemporary Age 1945-	7. Laodicea 1950-
1900			
1950			
2000			
2050			

3. Spiritual Affirmation

• Affirmation of conviction

Spiritual depth

§54 We study church history because it gives us a sense of conviction. Not appreciating the spiritual battles that have been fought presents a generational problem. We commonly see this in families between first generation and 2nd generation believers. First generation believers typically have a lot to overcome in their personal and spiritual lives, such as sin and degradation. In their spiritual lives, they might have a lot of doctrinal challenges. Such challenges require effort and concentration to overcome. Second generation believers have less challenge (not no challenge) because they start with the conclusions that their parents struggled for. As Jesus said:

Luke 7:47 Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loveth little.

§55 Similarly, Those in the past who struggled and overcame doctrinal challenges came away with a strong sense of conviction. We attend a discipleship class where we are given a number of doctrines reflecting our statement of faith. Even though those teachings are accompanied by some good apologetics, it does not approach the volumes of information of those who developed the argumentation back in the day when they were hotly debated. History will give us a sense of spiritual depth.

Church ministry

§56 By studying church history, we can see how some notions that seemed perfectly reasonable to us have played out, and not in a good way. We are also confirmed in good church practice which might seem hard but history shows it's the most worthwhile.

§57 One of the benefits of studying church history is that we can see truly how choices played out. We are so sure that many of the issues and decisions we face are critically significant. Sometimes we discover they are not while other times we find them confirmed by how they affected churches in the past. When you look at church history such issues have played out to their full. Perhaps leading figures of church history could not foresee how powerfully their lives would affect the future. Sometimes in dying they did not get to find out here on Earth how significant they were, but *we* do.

§58 For example, the work of the Moral Majority in the 1980s was certainly very important and it was a great blessing. However we might have been excited about that work at the time, it would have been a mistake to think that we would be establishing a theocracy that would persist beyond any success that was achieved. This somewhat mirrored the success and loss of the Puritans in the 1600s. We can work with greater confidence as we test our views against history.

§59 Church history is our history. Just as we can look back at how the events, people, and the background we came from personally informed us as we pursued God's plan for our lives, we can do that with the church.

Doctrine

§60 Church history is not to be seen as competing with the Bible but affirming the Bible. Spirituality and religion is not an evolutionary enterprise. We do not examine church history looking to see how theology has changed and evolved over the years, being refined and morphing into something that would be unrecognizable to the apostles or the prophets. We approach church history to see the ways that believers across each generation strove to recover from the distractions and attacks against the Kingdom of God keeping the Word of God fresh in their generation.

Isa 40:8 The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever.

§61 We examine what factors and events called for the articulation and defense of the difficult truths as we know them today. There was nothing new under the sun so that many of the doctrines and heresies they wrestled are revisited throughout history and into our modern times. There really isn't a whole lot of variation. Our doctrinal convictions are strengthened by history.

• Affirmation of God's Redemptive Plan

Dispensational fulfillment

§62 Church history is an affirmation of God's redemptive work that was presented by his prophets and apostles.

Matt 16:16-19 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19And 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.

§63 Jesus promised that he would build his church and we see that promise affirmed by revelation in the book of acts And by experience in church history. Peter's work would be a reflection of what God's will in heaven would be.

Matt 3:1-2 In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea,

2And saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matt 4:17 From that time [the baptism of Jesus] Jesus began to preach, and to

say, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matt 5:19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

Matt 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

§64 We were not only told about the Kingdom of heaven But the message of the Kingdom of heaven did not fall flat at the end of the ministry of Paul and the apostles. The revelation was given almost as an epilogue to the New Testament to assure us of the end and that there is an end. Revelation 2 and three is church history in a nutshell And is affirmed by the unfolding of God's word from those chapters over the course of history. We can tell where history was going and understand that everything we've seen has been right on course.

Fulfillment of Christ's promise

§65 Church history is a testimony to the promise of Christ that the church will not fail. No matter what the world has done to suppress and destroy the work of Christ, His church emerges victorious. There is a warning that not everyone would make it into the kingdom during this time.

Matt 7:21 Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven.

Matt 23:13 But woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the kingdom of heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

§66 But, even with the removal of the saints at the Rapture and the Gospel is carried on by the awakening of Israel, the church is established as universal when Christ returns with the church from glory to vanquish Satan. The kingdom of the world will think they can claim they are finally in control but will come to the sad realization that this is . Church history is a record of the ongoing conflict between the Kingdom of the world and the Kingdom of God.

• Affirmation of our position in church history

§67 We must understand Church History in its context. People met the challenges as they were presented to them in their time period. The things they tolerated might look strange to us in our time. Why was Platonism tolerated? How could leaders of the Reformation tolerate and commit such violence and persecution they condemned from Rome?

§68 If time goes on how will we be judged by future churches? Why have Fundamentalist Baptists turned to entertainment and dropping the name "Baptist"? How could we have gone from such strength of conviction to a watered down New Evangelicalism (p. 265)?

4. Spiritual commitment

§69 The early 19th century philosopher Hegel is quoted as saying "History teaches us that man learns nothing from history," and "What experience and history teaches us is that people and governments have never learned anything from history, or acted on principles deduced from it." Hegel was not suggesting that people *can't* learn from history, but as we examine the historical narrative, we see that people just have *failed* to *do* so.

In a 1948 speech to the British House of Commons, Winston Churchill said, "Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it." If we only attend to church growth without giving consideration to church history, we are likely to commit some of the same errors of the past because there is nothing new under the sun.

Eccl 1:9-11 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is* that which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.

10Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

11*There is* no remembrance of former *things*; neither shall there be *any* remembrance of *things* that are to come with *those* that shall come after.

After describing the lives of the saints who lived by faith in Hebrews 11, Paul wrote:

Heb 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset *us*, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

Those who lived, fought, and died in faith since then bear testimony to us through church history to encourage us to do our part in God's work. But their lives also serve as a warning to us just as Israel of old did:

1Cor 10:11 Now all these things happened unto them for ensamples: and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.

II . PREPARATION FOR THE MINISTRY OF THE CHURCH

§70 Christianity and church growth went "viral" immediately after Pentecost. New "religions" do not experience such rapid growth without extraordinary circumstances that come together with unique timing. The expansive growth of church history might have commenced with Pentecost, but the preparation to facilitate that expansion was already well established.

The Big Idea:
The expansion of the church was well in the making before the church ages started.

§71 The preparation for the ministry of the church actually started far back in the mind of God.

Eph 1:4,10 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love...

10That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; *even* in him:

§72 The preparation continued through the Dispensations of the Old Testament, and then on into ministry of John the Baptist and Jesus Christ. These areas are usually covered more thoroughly in a Bible college class and can be found in books on church history. We will specifically examine the pros and cons of notable factors that affected the inauguration of the church.

- The Change from the Old Dispensation
- Greek Influence on the Jews
- The Allegorical Method of Interpretation
- The Failure of the Pagan Religion
- Roman Organization
- Greek Culture
- Population Centers

1. The change from the old Dispensation

§73 In each dispensation (see also p. 236, and also a chart of the dispensations, p. 244), man has been given an expanded revelation and increased responsibility from God. Each dispensation is marked by man's failure to meet the expectations of that dispensation.

The Big Idea:
The change of the Dispensation was ripe to happen.

The failure of man at the end of each dispensation can be seen as evidence of the universal fallenness and sinful nature of humanity. It highlights that, regardless of the specific conditions or requirements set forth by God, mankind is inherently prone to disobedience and unable to fulfill God's standards on their own.

§74 The repeated failures at the end of each dispensation emphasize humanity's need for redemption and a Savior. The inability of humanity to live up to God's standards underscores the need for divine intervention to reconcile mankind with God and provide salvation.

§75 Man's failure at the end of each dispensation serves as a testament to God's grace and faithfulness. Despite humanity's repeated failures, God continues to extend His grace. He then offers opportunities for repentance. There is always the opportunity in any dispensation to have salvation through faith.

§76 The failures at the end of each dispensation demonstrate the futility of relying solely on human effort or following a set of rules to attain righteousness. This reveals the insufficiency of human works and highlights the need for God's grace as the means of salvation.

§77 The times were ripe for the next larger development of ministry that would occur through the church as you moved from the Dispensation of the Law to the Dispensation of Grace.

§78 After the end of the Babylonian captivity in 536 BC, there was a notable sense of diligence and zeal among the Jewish people. This period was known as *the Restoration*. There were significant efforts for the Jews to rebuild their lives as they restored their religious practices. Because of the compromises that had been made in the past, they were especially protective of the purity of their identity as a chosen people.

§79 However, they were not only concerned about their re-establishment as the chosen people. There were several factors that increased their Messianic sense during the Intertestamental Period (400 years between Old and New Testaments).

- The Hebrew Scriptures contain numerous prophecies that foretold the coming of a Messianic figure who would deliver and restore Israel. These prophecies found in Isaiah, Daniel, and Zechariah, and the Minor Prophets were well-known among the Jewish population. The anticipation grew as the fulfillment of these prophecies seemed imminent.
- The Intertestamental period was troubled with political instability from within. They also had pressure from foreign domination under the Persians, Greeks, and the Romans. There were also conflicts within Jewish religious sects. All of these factors created a longing for a leader who would liberate them from political oppression and restore the nation's independence.
- Other non-Biblical apocalyptic books often featured Messianic themes.
- Various individuals arose during the intertestamental period claiming to be the Messiah or figures with Messianic attributes. These figures, such as Simon Maccabee and Simon bar Kokhba, led revolts against foreign powers, further fueling the Messianic expectations among the people.

§80 The resurrected Christ and the church were going to be the next stage to change from the old dispensation to the new.

2. Greek influence on the Jews

§81 While a large portion of the population became even more zealous of their *Hebrew* character during the Maccabean revolt, there was *another* large portion of Jews that was *favorable* toward Greek culture. This was primarily fueled from the influence of the academic community in Alexandria of Egypt. When you read of Greeks

in the Gospels and Acts, it is often a reference to "Hellenized" Jews, not actual Greeks (*Hellas* is the Greek word Greece). This was especially due to the influence of Alexandria. This Hellenization served as a connection between the Jewish culture and the world, Greek culture.

The Big Idea:
The Greek cultural connection brought the Biblical world into greater contact.

- Alexandria was home to a large and influential Jewish population who had settled there making it one of the most significant centers of Jewish life outside of Judea.
- The Jews of Alexandria embraced aspects of Greek language, literature, philosophy, and customs, while also maintaining their distinct Jewish identity and religious practices. This blending of cultures resulted in the emergence of Jewish Hellenistic literature and philosophies.
- One of the notable contributions of Alexandria was the translation of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) into Greek. This translation, known as the Septuagint, was undertaken by Jewish scholars in Alexandria and made the Hebrew Scriptures accessible to Greek-speaking Jews and non-Jews alike. The Septuagint played a significant role in the spread of Jewish religious texts and ideas beyond the Hebrew-speaking world.
- The intellectual and cultural mix of Alexandria influenced Jewish thought and interpretation of Jewish religious texts. Hellenistic Jewish thinkers, such as Philo, sought to reconcile Greek philosophy with Jewish theology, resulting in the development of allegorical and philosophical interpretations of the Torah. However, this philosophical approach especially had a negative impact on later Jewish and Christian thinkers.

§82 Through Alexandria, Biblical faith made another connection to the rest of the world.

3. The allegorical method

§83 Pagan philosophers often employed allegory to explain pagan mythology. They recognized that many mythological narratives contained elements that could not be taken

The Big Idea:
The introduction of the allegorical method of interpretation will have a negative effect on the church

literally. They believed that beneath the surface of these stories lay deeper philosophical truths and moral lessons. Allegory allowed them to interpret the myths symbolically and extract philosophical or ethical teachings from them. The use of allegory in explaining mythology showcased their ability to delve deeper into the meanings of stories and explore philosophical, moral, or metaphysical dimensions. This is evident in the manner that Paul addressed the Athenians. Although he did not use allegory in his sermon, you can still get the sense of how the Greeks would have heard his message from a philosophical view:

Acts 17:18-32 Then certain philosophers of the Epicureans, and of the Stoicks, encountered him. And some said, What will this babbler say? other some, He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods: because he preached unto them Jesus, and the resurrection.

19And they took him, and brought him unto Areopagus, saying, May we know what this new doctrine, whereof thou speakest, *is*?

20For thou bringest certain strange things to our ears: we would know therefore what these things mean.

21(For all the Athenians and strangers which were there spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell, or to hear some new thing.)

22Then Paul stood in the midst of Mars' hill, and said, *Ye men of Athens, I perceive that in all things ye are too superstitious.*

23For as I passed by, and beheld your devotions, I found an altar with this inscription, TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you.

24God that made the world and all things therein, seeing that he is Lord of heaven and earth, dwelleth not in temples made with hands;

25Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

26And hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation;

27That they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of us:

28For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

29Forasmuch then as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the Godhead is like unto gold, or silver, or stone, graven by art and man's device.

30And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where to repent:

31Because he hath appointed a day, in the which he will judge the world in righteousness by *that* man whom he hath ordained; *whereof* he hath given assurance unto all *men*, in that he hath raised him from the dead.

32And when they heard of the resurrection of the dead, some mocked: and others said, We will hear thee again of this *matter*.

§84 You can compare this sermon to his message in the synagogue in Acts 13 where he emphasizes the Biblical account of the separation of Israel in the Exodus instead of philosophical considerations.

[The allegorical method], as applied to ancient documents, was not the invention of Philo or of his Jewish-Alexandrian predecessors. It had been employed for centuries by the Greeks in the interpretation of Homer and was probably in common use among the Egyptian priests. In fact it is an obvious device in connection with any esoteric system of religion. But it is doubtful whether it had ever been employed so systematically and effectively as by this writer. Everything that is opposed to his philosophical conceptions of God and the universe and to his sense of propriety in the recorded deeds of men of God yields readily to this universal solvent. It is almost certain that if Philo and those like-minded had been shut up to a literal treatment of the Scriptures they would have rejected them as falling in their opinion far below the writings of the Greek philosophers in dignity, beauty, and spirituality. Having no true historical perspective, they were unable to appreciate the progressiveness of divine revelation or to understand aright the relation of the human and the divine in Scripture. This corrupting feature of Philo's work was laid hold of by early Christian writers...

§85 [With respect to Philo's *logos*] In relation to God the Word is "Eternal Wisdom," "the sum of the thoughts of God," "the Idea of Ideas, which imparts reality to all lower ideas," "the whole mind of God, considered as traveling outside of itself and expressing itself in act." He is the "Shadow of God," the "Eldest Son," "the First-born" of God. He is thought of as the "Sum," as the "Creator," as the "Captain," and the "Archangel" of the other Powers. In relation to the universe the Word is represented as the instrumental cause or organ of creation, as the Creator, as the Viceregent of the Great King. In relation to man the Logos is "the Mediator, the Heavenly Man, who represents in the eyes of God the whole family upon earth." He is the High Priest, the Supplicator, the Paraclete. Philo makes him say: "I stand between the Lord and you, I am neither uncreated like God nor created like you, but a mean between the two extremes, a hostage to either side."...While it is not improbable that the writer of this Gospel was familiar either with Philo's writings or with the Jewish-Alexandrian mode of thought from which they proceeded, its simplicity and freedom from heathen speculative elements radically differentiate his representation from the Philonic, and show clearly the divine impress. [We can see the influence of the Gnostics on why John wrote his Gospel.]

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2The same was in the beginning with God.

3All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

§86 It was on the theology of the Gnostics and of the Alexandrian school of Christian thought (second and third centuries) that Philo's writings were to exert the most marked influence.(Newman 1 39-41)

4. The failure of pagan religion

§87 Greek religion, with its focus on the spiritual interpretation of nature and its contributions to aesthetics, fell short in providing a *moral* framework and fulfilling the deeper religious yearnings of more earnest individuals. Well before the Christian era, the foundations of Greek religion had been weakened by philosophical speculations, and skepticism had become widespread.

§88 The infusion of Greek thought with Eastern theosophy (the pursuit of wisdom and insight through spiritual and mystical practices) heightened the religious yearnings of a significant group of thinkers. But, it was unable to fully satisfy them. This blending brought to the forefront profound questions about existence: the origin and fate of the world and humanity, the source and purpose of evil, the relationship between the creator and the Supreme Being, the interaction between the Supreme Being and humanity and the world, and the interplay between matter and spirit. Satisfactory solutions to these questions remained elusive.

§89 Many began to recognize the necessity for a divine revelation and, above all, for a Divine Savior who could address these pressing concerns. The desire for a deeper understanding and a spiritual path that could provide genuine answers grew stronger among them. (based on Newman 18,19)

The Big Idea:
Disappointment with paganism made the pagan world ready to receive Christianity.

5. Roman organization

§90 Fundamentally [the Roman] religion was a pantheistic worship of nature. Everything that exists was regarded as permeated by Deity. The individual deities were partially personified abstractions of the powers of nature. As compared with the Greek religion it produced more of calm piety, was practiced with more dignity and order, was more strictly ritualistic, was more carefully upheld and administered by the State, and was more practical in its subservience to the interests of the State. Images and temples were not introduced until a hundred and seventy years after the founding of the city.

§91 Religion with the Romans was never a matter of feeling, always a matter of form. The securing of divine favor was thought to depend upon the exactitude with which all ceremonies were performed and all prayers uttered. The slightest mistake in word or gesture rendered the entire proceedings ineffective. The same rite was sometimes repeated thirty or even fifty times because of slight defects in utterance or

The Big Idea:
Roman organization would not only positively provide the infrastructure for the expansion of the church, it would negatively influence the church with paganism

manipulation.

§92 Theoretically every householder was the priest of his household as the king was the priest of the State; but the necessity of having the religious rites performed by experts gave great power to the priests. They alone had perfect familiarity with the names and functions of the gods and knew precisely what god was to be propitiated in order to secure the needful blessing or to ward off threatening calamity, and also the details of the rites by which favor was to be obtained.

§93 Even before the founding of the republic (B.C. 509) there was a Pontifex Maximus at the head of a college of pontiffs, whose business it was to supervise all the religious affairs of the State and to give judgment in every religious cause (see more p. 116). These pontiffs were attorneys and counselors in religious law, and as officials of the State had vast influence.

§94 The College of Augurs were the official soothsayers, whose business it was by observing the flight of birds and other phenomena to determine the attitude of the gods toward contemplated State measures. [Like a future college of Cardinals]

...

When the republic was transformed into the empire (31 B.C.) Augustus strove in vain to check the process of decay and to restore the national religion to its pristine position. He assumed personally the office of Pontifex Maximus, thus combining in his own person the civil and religious supremacy and giving full recognition to the popular religion as an institution of the State. [Like a future pope]

§95 1. The Roman conquest broke down the barriers between East and West and between province and province, and welded the whole civilized world into an organic whole administered from Rome as its center (see more, p. 6). Palestine was a Roman province at the beginning of our era and Jewish rulers administered the government under Roman authority. Jews were free as never before to settle in all parts of the Grreco-Roman world, and Jewish synagogues, which were in many cases to furnish opportunity for the planting and dissemination of Christian truth, were to be found in every city. A religion originating in Judea had at this time a far better opportunity to make its way throughout the world than it would have had under other circumstances. [Like a future universal church]

§96 2. The extension of Roman citizenship to individuals throughout the provinces was of immense advantage to such preachers of the gospel as possessed it.

§97 3. The construction of excellent roadways throughout the empire for military and commercial purposes was no doubt greatly promotive of the diffusion of Christianity.

§98 4. Apart from the excellence of the roads travel was rendered far safer than it had ever been before. The profound peace that settled over the world, the careful enforcement everywhere of law and order, made the work of the missionary comparatively easy. The Roman Empire was to the early Christian missionary what the British Empire is to the modern, with this important difference, that England favors and protects missionaries as such, while Christianity was to the Roman Empire an unlawful religion and was frequently persecuted. (Newman 1 19-21)

The *Pax Romana*, or Roman Peace, that lasted from 27 BC to 180 AD, was was a period of relative peace and stability that lasted from approximately 27 BC to 180 AD, during the early Roman Empire. It was characterized by a lack of major military conflicts and a general sense of security for the early growth of the church.

The Roman Republic and later the Roman Empire had a long history of legal development, and Latin was the language of the Roman legal system. Many of the

foundational legal texts, such as the Twelve Tables, the Codex of Justinian, and various legal commentaries and decrees, were written in Latin. It was the administrative and official language of the Roman state, and the Romans were known for their meticulous legal and administrative practices. Using Latin for legal documents was a continuation of Roman legal traditions.

Greek was a more flexible and expressive language for philosophical and literary discourse. It had a deep tradition in these areas and was favored by many scholars and thinkers.

The Roman Empire absorbed and was influenced by Greek culture, particularly in the eastern provinces. This included Greek philosophy, literature, and art. Many Roman intellectuals and elites were bilingual, well-versed in both Latin and Greek.

The division of languages for different purposes became a cultural and intellectual tradition, reflecting the historical background and the different roles of the two languages in the Roman world.

When the Roman Empire split into the Western and Eastern Roman Empires, the practice of using Latin for legal documents and Greek for philosophy and literature was continued. It was further entrenched in the Byzantine period.

6. Greek culture

§99 Although Roman organization greatly affected the legal nature of the ancient world, the Greeks literature, art, and philosophical character impacted the world's aesthetics. Besides the impact of philosophical inquiry of Plato and Aristotle on the ages to come, the pervasive use of the Greek language leftover from the Greek Empire greatly facilitated the growth of the church. With Greek as the primary means of communication, the Greek-speaking proponents of the faith found themselves equipped to connect with intelligent and receptive individuals from diverse backgrounds without the need to learn new languages.

The Big Idea:
 Greek language and culture will provide a revolutionary advance in communication for the Gospel

§100 During the time of Jesus and the early Christian Church, Greek had become a *lingua franca*, or a common language, across much of the eastern Mediterranean and the Roman Empire. Latin was the legal language, but Greek was the cultural language. This widespread use of Greek facilitated communication and allowed for the dissemination of Christian teachings to diverse populations. The accessibility of the Greek language made it easier for early Christian missionaries to reach and engage with people from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

§101 The New Testament, the sacred text of Christianity, was originally written in Greek. The choice to write the New Testament in Greek, rather than Hebrew or Aramaic, ensured that the teachings and accounts of Jesus Christ, as well as the letters of the early Christian leaders, could be widely understood and studied. The availability of the New Testament in Greek enabled its distribution, translation, and interpretation across different regions, contributing to the growth and establishment of the Christian

Church.

§102 The Greek language provided access to philosophical concepts, vocabulary, and modes of reasoning that facilitated the theological development and articulation of Christian doctrines. This will stand out in contrast to dogmatic and mystical declarations.

§103 Greek was a language well-suited for translation, and it had an established tradition of translation in the ancient world. This allowed Christian texts to be translated into other languages, making the the translation of Christian scriptures, theological works, and liturgical texts into various languages which contributed to the expansion and establishment of the Christian Church beyond Greek-speaking communities.

The writings of the early Church Fathers, known as patristic literature, were predominantly composed in Greek. These theological treatises, sermons, and commentaries expressed and developed Christian doctrines and provided guidance for the early Christian community. The Greek language allowed for the preservation and transmission of these influential works.

7. Population centers

§104 Population centers were highly influential in the growth and spread of churches. They already had economic systems, international status, and international infrastructure that channeled the world through them. Several major cities in the early church ages especially played significant roles.

The Big Idea:
Population centers will act as hubs
for church planting

- Jerusalem was the birthplace of the Christian faith, and it held great importance in the early years of the church. The events of Jesus' ministry, crucifixion, resurrection, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost all occurred in Jerusalem. The apostles and early believers initially focused their efforts on Jerusalem, and it served as a center of Christian activity and teaching.
- Antioch, located in present-day Turkey, became a crucial hub of early church planting activity. It was a diverse and cosmopolitan city, serving as a bridge between Eastern and Western cultures. Antioch became a significant center for missionary work, and it was from Antioch that Paul and Barnabas were sent out on their missionary journeys. The term "Christian" was first used to describe the followers of Jesus in Antioch.
- As the capital of the Roman Empire, Rome held immense influence and power. The Christian community in Rome emerged early on. The presence of a strong Christian community in Rome contributed to the spread of Christianity throughout the empire.
- Ephesus, situated in present-day Turkey, was an important city in the Roman province of Asia. The apostle Paul spent considerable time in Ephesus. Later, it was like a hub for the Seven Churches of the Revelation.
- Corinth, located in Greece, was a bustling commercial center and a melting pot of different cultures. The Corinthian church became emblematic of the struggles and

issues faced by early Christian communities.

- Other notable cities that influenced the growth of the early church include Alexandria (Egypt), Thessalonica (Greece), and Philippi (Greece).

§105 Later, five cities emerged that laid claim to having *patriarchal preeminence* (p. 119). These cities were often associated with prominent apostles, early Christian leaders, or had historical and cultural significance.

- Rome held a special position due to its status as the capital of the Roman Empire and the historical connection to the apostles Peter and Paul, who were believed to have been martyred in Rome. The Roman bishop (later known as the Pope) held a position of authority and was considered the successor of Peter, asserting Rome's eminence.
- Jerusalem, as the birthplace of Christianity, held a unique status in the early church. The presence of the apostles and their leadership in the city, along with the significance of Jerusalem in biblical history, contributed to its eminence.
- Alexandria, located in Egypt, was a prominent city in the early church and boasted a renowned theological school. It was associated with notable theologians and influential leaders, such as Clement of Alexandria and Origen.
- Antioch, situated in modern-day Turkey, was a significant center of early Christian activity. Antioch was associated with important figures such as Paul, Barnabas, and Ignatius of Antioch.
- Much later, Constantinople emerged as a prominent city and claimed eminence in the Christian church during the Byzantine Empire. The city's strategic location, imperial patronage, and the establishment of the Ecumenical Patriarchate (p. 119) contributed to its influence. Constantinople became a center of theological debates, church councils, and political power within the Christian world.

III . EPHESUS 30-100

THE CHURCH THAT LOST ITS FIRST LOVE

Rev 2:1-7 Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;

2I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not, and hast found them liars:

3And hast borne, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

4Nevertheless I have *somewhat* against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.

5Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

6But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

7He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

§106 Jesus commended the church of Ephesus for its labor and patience. However, it was also warned about having lost its first love. The character of this church age represented in this time frame was not idyllic. There were false teachers they had to contend with. The history of the church was marred by the end of the age with those who were poised to lead the church astray in the next age.

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Ephesus

§107 Covenant theologians (p. 208) confuse the Old and the New Testament ages and say that Israel was the Church in the Old Testament. This is obviously problematic. We say that this church age started with 30 AD, but the number date of the start of this age is not as critical as much as what *constituted* the church, or at

what phase you could say all the parts of the church were in place. There are *several* dates that are possible depending on what you regard as the start of the church. Some regard the ministry of John the Baptist as the start because the law and the prophets were until the ministry of John (Luke 16:16). Others regard the giving of the Holy Spirit; which could actually be one of *two* times: the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples after the Resurrection (John 20:22), or the *empowering* of the church at Pentecost (Acts 2). Certainly all parts of the church (the message, the mission, the apostles, and the Holy Spirit) were in place by the year of the crucifixion and

The Big Idea:

The beginning of this age is characterized by the establishment of the work of the apostles

resurrection.

Because the ministry of John the Baptist began in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius (Luke 3:1), we can set the start of the ministry of Christ when He was about 30 years of age (Luke 3:23) in the year 28 AD. This would place the resurrection, the giving of the spirit after the resurrection, and Pentecost at 31 AD. The claim that the church started at Pentecost is only slightly beneficial to those who believe that the baptism of the Spirit founded the church and so should continue after the age of the Apostles.

§108 We can say 30 AD marks the beginning of the age using round numbers and because the apostles had been chosen by that time for what has also been called the Apostolic Age.

§109 The end of the Ephesian church age is set by the death of John, the last remaining apostle, around the year 100. It was after this that persecutions as described for the next church age really started to take effect.

§110 Taking into account the variations due to scholarship, we still have reason to be pretty confident in the timing of the events for this age. The most basic breakdown of the time line of the early church would be:

4/25/31 Resurrection

6/14/31 Pentecost

31-33 – Acts 1-8 The launch of the church **8 chapters - Two years**

34-44 – Acts 9-12 The conversion of Paul, the Ministry of Peter **4 chapters - 10 years**

46-48 – Acts 13-14 Paul's First Missionary Journey

49-50 – Acts 15 Jerusalem Counsel

51-54 – Acts 15-18 Paul's Second Missionary Journey

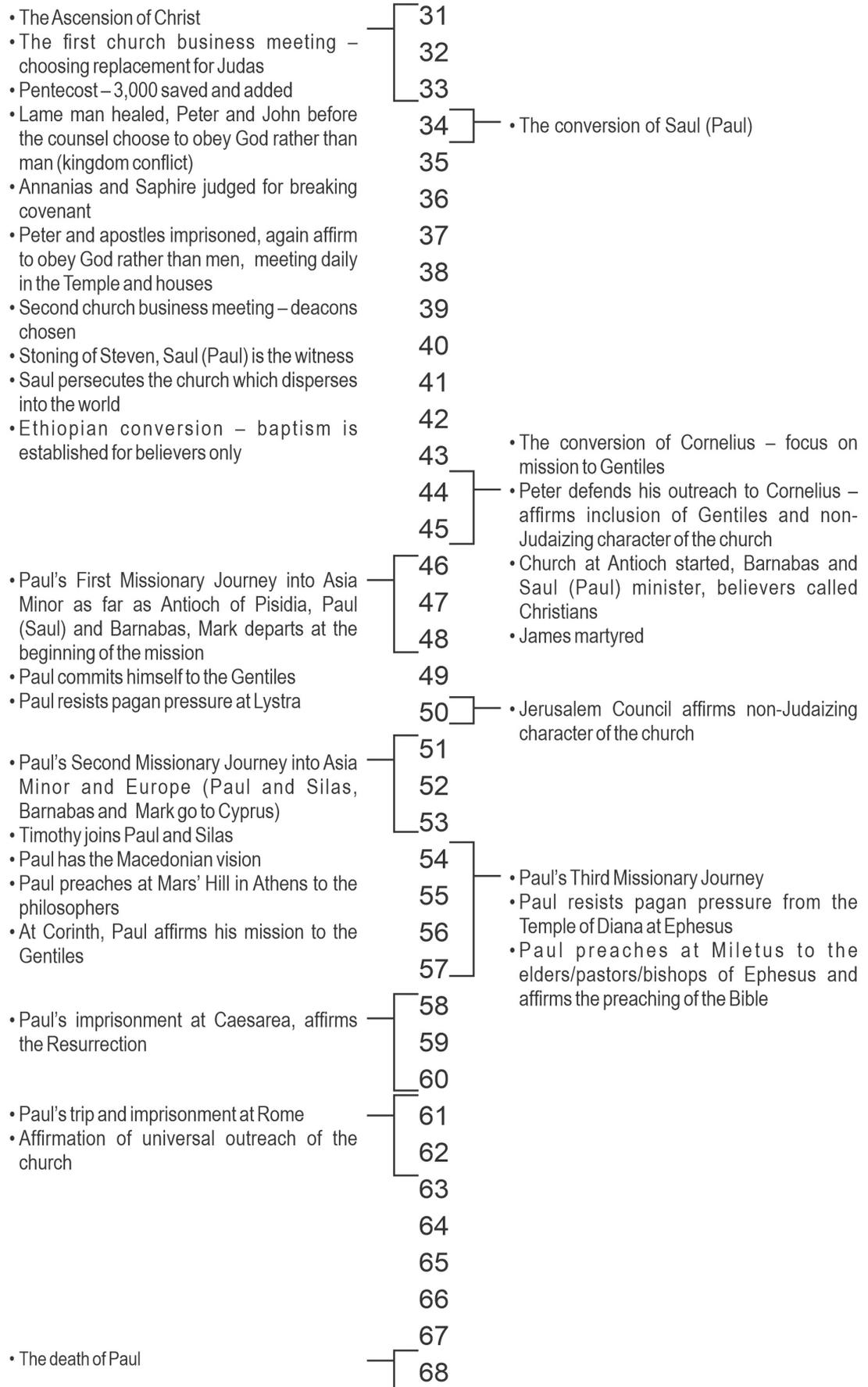
55-57 – Acts 18-21 Paul's Third Missionary Journey

58-60 – Acts 22-26 Paul's imprisonment in Caesarea

61-62 – Acts 27-28 Paul's trip to and imprisonment in Rome **16 chapters - 29 years**

See page 38 for a more descriptive time line.

Time Line of New Testament Churches



2. Character of the Age

• The missions of the Twelve Apostles

§111 Most Bible students are familiar with the ministry of Peter and the mission work and Scriptures of Paul. However, *all* the apostles went out to spread the Gospel.

§112 Most of the knowledge about the missions work of the apostles comes from tradition. Egyptians and Indians are

confident about the missions work of Mark and Thomas. Roman Catholics firmly believe that Peter was the first bishop of Rome and therefore the first pope. However, there is no reason, Biblically, to justify that belief. The Greek Orthodox church firmly believes that the patriarchy of Constantinople¹ was founded on the ministry of Andrew. The missions of the twelve according to tradition are:

Simon Peter is believed to have traveled throughout the eastern Mediterranean, including the regions of Judea, Samaria, Antioch, Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, Bithynia, and Babylon where he ministered primarily to "the circumcision" (the Jews).

Andrew is said to have preached in the regions around the Black Sea, including modern-day Greece, Russia, and Ukraine.

James, the son of Zebedee, was the first of the apostles to be martyred. He preached in Judea and Samaria.

John is traditionally associated with the city of Ephesus.

Philip is said to have preached in various regions, including Greece and Phrygia (part of present-day Turkey).

Bartholomew (also known as Nathanael) is believed to have traveled to India and possibly Armenia.

Thomas is commonly associated with his missionary work in India.

Matthew (also known as Levi) is traditionally associated with the region of Ethiopia.

James, the son of Alphaeus, is believed to have preached in areas including Palestine and Egypt.

Thaddeus (also known as Lebbaeus or Judas, son of James), is associated with missionary work in Mesopotamia and parts of modern-day Iraq and Iran.

Simon the Zealot is said to have preached in regions such as Egypt, Persia (modern-day Iran), and possibly Britain.

Judas Iscariot was later replaced by Matthias. After the betrayal of Jesus, Judas died. The specific missionary activities of Matthias are not recorded in the Bible.

The Big Idea:
The ministry of the early church was not the product of a few all-stars.

¹The Patriarchy of Constantinople is similar to the Papacy of Rome. In the Great Schism of 1054 (p. 145), the Eastern Orthodox Patriarchies split from Rome.

• Paul vs. Peter

§113 Because of Paul's extensive work amongst the Gentiles and how his writings dealt with the expansion of Christianity in Gentile culture, there are some who claim that Christianity was the invention of Paul. The idea that Christianity was solely the creation of the apostle Paul is a minority viewpoint among scholars and

historians. They especially try to draw a distinction between the ministry of Peter and Paul to try to make the initial church different from what Paul "created."

The Big Idea:
While some had different emphases from each other, they were complementary. Their theology had integrity.

Mistaken significance of Paul's influence

§114 While Paul played a highly influential role in the spread of Christianity and the development of early Christian theology, attributing the entire religion to him is an oversimplification. This excessive significance is based on what are actually very positive aspects of Paul's influence.

- Paul's letters, which make up a significant portion of the New Testament, provided profound theological insights and guidance for early Christian communities.
- Paul's missionary journeys and his efforts to establish churches throughout the Mediterranean world played a crucial role in the early expansion which impacted the growth of the faith beyond its Jewish origins.
- Paul's theological teachings, particularly his emphasis on salvation by faith in Jesus Christ, grace, and the role of the Holy Spirit, were extensively developed by him.

§115 It is important to note that Christianity emerged from the teachings of Jesus Christ Himself, as recorded in the Gospels, as well as the collective witness and teachings of the original apostles and early Christian communities.

§116 The foundational beliefs and practices of Christianity were established before Paul's conversion, and Paul himself acknowledged his dependence on the traditions and teachings he received from the apostles who preceded him.

Peter's and Paul's ministries were complementary

§117 There is no conflict between Paul and Peter. Their ministries were distinct and served different purposes. Peter ministered in the East where the Jewish Diaspora² was prominent and was considered the Apostle to the Circumcision (the Jews). Paul also

²The Diaspora was the dispersion of the Jews throughout the Persian and, later, Greek, and Roman Empire. It started in the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities of the Jews as they remained behind after the restoration to the land.

had outreach to the Diaspora where he went, but his ministry was challenged to respond to the predominant Gentile communities of western civilization and earned him the title of the Apostle to the Uncircumcision (the non-Jews). Their ministries were different, but not in the Gospel message or theology. They were different, but complementary.

Gal 2:7-10 But contrariwise, when they saw that the gospel of the uncircumcision was committed unto me, as *the gospel* of the circumcision was unto Peter;

8(For he that wrought effectually in Peter to the apostleship of the circumcision, the same was mighty in me toward the Gentiles:)

9And when James, Cephas, and John, who seemed to be pillars, perceived the grace that was given unto me, they gave to me and Barnabas the right hands of fellowship; that we *should go* unto the heathen, and they unto the circumcision.

10Only *they would* that we should remember the poor; the same which I also was forward to do.

§118 In the blending of Jew and Gentile in the church, the Jewish constituency receded due to their stubborn intransigence. The predominance of the Gentile community would naturally promote western reasoning over eastern modes of thought that depended more on oriental imagery (especially for the Jews) or downright arbitrary mythology in oriental paganism.

Paul's growth in Tarsus uniquely equipped him to be the one to bridge the gap into the new dispensation with a greater emphasis on rationality:

The Big Idea:

The Jewish component that was the predominant emphasis of Peter retreated due to *their* failure to progress, not by the Gentiles overshadowing them. Paul bridged the gap from the Jewish world to the Gentile world.

- Tarsus was a melting pot of different cultures and ethnicities. This diversity fostered a vibrant intellectual atmosphere, as different ideas, perspectives, and traditions intermingled.
- Tarsus had strong ties to Greek and Roman cultural traditions. Greek philosophy, literature, and educational practices heavily influenced the city. It was known for its Greek-style gymnasiums, where young men would receive a comprehensive education that encompassed rhetoric, philosophy, mathematics, and physical education.
- Tarsus was particularly associated with Stoic philosophy which emphasized ethics, logic, and the pursuit of virtue as essential aspects of life. Influential Stoic philosophers hailed from Tarsus, adding to its intellectual reputation.
- Tarsus enjoyed the favor and patronage of Roman emperors, contributing to its prominence as an educational center. The Roman authorities recognized the city's

intellectual and cultural contributions, attracting scholars, philosophers, and teachers to settle there.

- Tarsus was strategically located on the major trade routes connecting Asia Minor to the Mediterranean world. This allowed for the exchange of ideas, knowledge, and resources, further enhancing its intellectual climate.

There was a transitional character to the ministry of Peter

§119 We should also take note of the *transitional* ministry of Peter. After significant activity in the first two years of the church, it took another 10 years before a significant step was taken to include the Gentiles. Peter, in particular, had a pivotal role in this development. He received a vision regarding the acceptance of the "unclean" and had contact with the Gentile centurion Cornelius. As a Jew, Peter witnessed the giving of the sign of tongues, which endorsed the next phase of missions to the Gentiles (see p. 81). Peter's testimony laid the foundation for the Jerusalem Council to welcome Gentiles, even in the face of pressure from the Judaizers (p. 61). Furthermore, Peter endorsed Paul in his letter (2 Peter), acknowledging that there were people critical of what appeared to be "the new religion of Paul."

2Pet 3:15-16 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

3. Challenges of the Age

§120 The challenges we are specifically interested are those that were significant in relationship to the shaping of church history. As we read through the New Testament, we are exposed to the arguments that the early church faced and how the *Apostles* responded to them.

§121 When we read through the letters of *church leaders*, those letters also present arguments over their challenges, even though their writings are not inspired. The challenge they faced was to refresh their understanding by going back to the accepted canon and not depending on the accretions that grew in the church over time. The challenges are categorized according to what systematic theology they are related to (p. 4).

§122 The teaching for this period will be a little longer than we might see in the next periods because we are establishing a doctrinal baseline by which the other periods will be compared.

§123 At first, the source of the challenges faced in the Ephesian church will be

The Big Idea:
The important challenges of each age are those that shaped the history of churches

religious as the identity of the church is established. As the end of the age approaches, the age will face philosophical influences.

• Bibliology

The use of the Old Testament canon

§124 During the *Second Temple Period* (5th to 2nd c. BC), after the Jews came back from the Babylonian Captivity and rebuilt the Temple, there was what has been considered the "Great Synagogue" according to Jewish tradition. It referred to a distinguished and authoritative assembly of Jewish scribes, scholars, and leaders. Our understanding of the Great Synagogue is dependent on references to it in the Talmud that was recorded from 100-500 AD. It denoted a central and influential body that played a leading role in three things:

- Preserving Jewish traditions in the Oral Torah
- Promoting religious reforms
- Shaping the development of Jewish religious and cultural life.

§125 While historical records are limited, Jewish tradition attributes significant achievements to the Great Synagogue. While they established institutional practices and preserved oral traditions, we are especially interested in how they compiled and defined the Jewish canon.

§126 Although the specific details are not well-documented, Jewish tradition attributes to the Great Synagogue the responsibility of recognizing and accepting the books that make up the Hebrew Bible, including the Torah (the first five books), the Prophets, and the Writings. It was this canon that Jesus referred to in His endorsement of the Old Testament. Although Biblical writers might refer to other books no longer in existence, only the ones in existence and recognized by the Jews were endorsed by Christ. The books mentioned by the Old Testament writers include:

- Book of Adam (Gen 5:1)
- Book of the Wars of the Lord (Num 21:14-15)
- Book of Jasher (Josh 10:13, 2 Sam 1:18)
- Book of the Acts of Solomon (1 Kings 11:41)
- Book of Nathan the Prophet, Book of Gad the Seer, and Book of Jehu: (1 Chro 29:29, 2 Chro 9:29)
- Book of Shemaiah the Prophet and Book of Iddo the Seer (2 Chro 12:15, 9:29)

§127 Also, simply being *mentioned* does make a book canonical as in the New Testament with the case of Paul's reference to a poet in his sermon on Mars Hill and

The Big Idea:
The Old Testament canon was completed by the time of Christ and endorsed by Him.

Epimendes, a Cretan prophet, in the book of Titus. Jude refers to The book of Enoch, which does not mean the book that passed itself off as the book of Enoch that we have today.

§128 While the Septuagint, a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, was widely used among Greek-speaking Jewish communities and early Christians, the Hebrew text continued to be the primary source for Jewish religious practice, study, and interpretation during the first century.

§129 The Masoretic Text, which is the authoritative Hebrew text of the Jewish Bible (Tanakh), was established and developed by the Masoretes. The Masoretes were Jewish scholars and scribes who worked between the 7th and 10th centuries AD to meticulously preserve and transmit the text of the Hebrew Bible.

§130 While the core content of the Hebrew Bible *predates* the Masoretes, the specific system of vowel markings (vocalization) and accenting as well as the detailed notes on the text (masorah), were added by the Masoretes during their work of textual preservation and standardization. This resulted in the establishment of the Masoretic Text as the accepted authoritative version of the Hebrew Bible. Their work was crucial in ensuring the accurate transmission and pronunciation of the Hebrew text over the centuries.

§131 The canon³ of Christ's day was referred to in the New Testament as the Law and the Prophets. Jesus also mentioned the Psalms specifically.

John 1:45 Philip findeth Nathanael, and saith unto him, We have found him, of whom Moses in the law, and the prophets, did write, Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.

Acts 13:15 And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, *Ye men and brethren*, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on.

Acts 24:14 But this I confess unto thee, that after the way which they call heresy, so worship I the God of my fathers, believing all things which are written in the law and in the prophets:

Rom 3:21 But now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets;

Matt 11:13 For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John.

Luke 24:44 And he said unto them, These *are* the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and *in* the prophets, and *in* the psalms, concerning me.

Since the New Testament was in the course of being written, church leaders would

³The canon of the Old Testament was described in the *Bava Batra Tractate* [gate final, or the final gate] of the Babylonian Talmud written probably by 300 BC. See:
https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.14b.1?lang=bi
https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.15a.2?lang=bi

refer primarily to the Old Testament in their apologetics.

The completion of the inspired text

§132 During the time of the Apostles, God was still revealing His Word to them by inspiration.

- The Word of God is an accurate mirror that reflects back to us what we are.

Jas 1:22-25 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

23For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

24For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

25But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

Heb 4:12-13 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.

13Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things *are* naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

- The Word of God was incomplete as a mirror, but when it was completed, we no longer needed extra revelation. The three revelatory gifts of tongues, special knowledge, and predictive prophecy were used until that time.

1Cor 13:8-12 Charity never faileth: but whether *there be* prophecies, they shall fail; whether *there be* tongues, they shall cease; whether *there be* knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

- Extra revelation was clearly cut off with the Revelation.

The Big Idea:
The New Testament canon was completed by 100 AD and affirmed by 419 AD with no real dispute.

Rev 22:18-19 For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

19And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

§133 By the 4th c., the Council of Hippo (393 AD), Council of Carthage (397 AD), and the Third Council of Carthage (419 AD), affirmed the 27 books of the New Testament. No other books were ever considered except disapprovingly in the arguments against heretics.

See page 50 for a time line of the writing of the books of the New Testament.

Apocrypha are not included

John 21:24-25 This is the disciple which testifieth of these things, and wrote these things: and we know that his testimony is true.

25And there are also many other things which Jesus did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. Amen.

§134 Whether any other messages were given by revelation was not an issue during this time period because all the New Testament was given by revelation. The only question for this age was whether there were any other books that had any claim to be included in the New Testament canon. The early church easily dismissed them because they just didn't fit apostolic qualifications even though some *were* authentic and useful. Many were just distinctly problematic.

§135 Some of the New Testament were apocryphal texts, from the Greek word *apókryphos*, meaning "from a hidden source," one of the reasons why they were not accepted. They used quotes or references from books that ended up being included in the official New Testament to lend authority to themselves. This practice was not uncommon in early Christian writings, including both canonical and non-canonical texts. By referencing or quoting from well-established and revered scriptures, the authors of these apocryphal texts sought to bolster their own credibility and legitimacy among the Christian communities.

§136 It's important to understand that the mere *use* of quotes from canonical books did not guarantee the inclusion of these apocryphal texts in the New Testament. Early Christian leaders and councils carefully evaluated various factors, including the theological consistency, apostolic authorship, and widespread acceptance, before determining which texts would be considered authoritative and part of the biblical canon.

For example, the alleged Gospel of Peter describes the crucifixion in a way that is consistent with a Docetic view of *the Christ* departing from Jesus, a heretical view of Christ known as *Adoptionism* (p. 51, 53).

Jesus' cry from the cross, which the Gospels of Mark and Matthew give as "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" which Mark and Matthew explain as meaning, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" is reported in the Gospel of Peter as "My power, my

power, thou hast forsaken me." Immediately after, Peter states that, "when he had said it, he was taken up", suggesting that Jesus did not actually die...On the cross Jesus "remained silent, as though he felt no pain."⁴

Another example is *The Gospel of Thomas*. It has been promoted as an alternative Biblical source.

Why the Gospel of Thomas isn't in the Bible

by Ryan Leasure crossexamined.org/why-the-gospel-of-thomas-isnt-in-the-bible/

There's a common refrain among liberal scholars that says the church suppressed dozens of Gospels. The reason they say? It's because those books share scandalous information about Jesus that the church wanted to hide. They didn't want the world to know sketchy details like Jesus tortured other kids as a child or that he had a wife.

Of all these "suppressed" Gospels, far and away the poster child is the Gospel of Thomas. Liberal scholars such as John Dominic Crossan and Elaine Pagels faun over this work. The Jesus Seminar even published a book titled *The Five Gospels*, which includes the canonical four-plus Thomas.

Yet there's a bit of irony here. If these scholars would treat the canonical Gospels with half the amount of charity they give to Thomas, they'd all be Christians! Instead, they date Thomas very early and the canonical Gospels late. They claim Thomas' view of Jesus is reliable, while the canonical Gospels contain myths and legends.

By contrast, I'm going to demonstrate...that the Gospel of Thomas is unreliable, was never considered as Scripture by the early church, and thus shouldn't be included in our canon.

The Gospel of Thomas

In 1945, some farmers in Nag Hammadi Egypt were digging and came across an earthenware jar in the ground. The farmers, hoping to find treasure, were deeply disappointed when they found a bunch of texts instead. Little did they know those texts would be more valuable than any treasure they could hope to find.

Among the cache of texts was one that begins, "These are the secret sayings which the living Jesus spoke and which Didymos Judas Thomas wrote down," and ends with "The Gospel According to Thomas."

Unlike the canonical Gospels, Thomas doesn't follow a narrative structure. It doesn't report major parts of Jesus' life – his birth, death, and resurrection. Instead, Thomas contains 114 esoteric sayings of Jesus, purporting to record the secrets Jesus taught to his disciples.

Canonical Attributes

Before we can answer why Thomas doesn't belong in the canon, we need to know what the early church looked for in a canonical book. In sum, the church looked for three different attributes — apostolic authority, divine qualities, and corporate reception. These three attributes formed a type of canonical grid by which to test a book.

By apostolic authority, the church only received books that could be traced to apostolic eye-witness testimony. This would include books written by both apostles and their close associates. For example, the church obviously received John's writings because he was one of the apostles. But they also received Mark, based on the fact that

⁴https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_Peter

he was Peter's close associate.

By divine qualities, the church looked for books that gave evidence of God's fingerprints. One such piece of evidence was consistency with other authoritative books. Since Christians believe the Holy Spirit inspired all the biblical texts, they knew none of them would contradict each other.

By corporate reception, the church only received books that the universal church also received as authoritative. In other words, if only one pocket of Christianity affirmed the authority of a book, that book was rejected. The reception had to stretch across all of Christendom.

Apostolic Authority? ...the consensus among scholarship is that the book dates to the middle of the second century — long after the apostles had died out. That is to say, Jesus' disciple Thomas did not write this book.

A few reasons exist for dating this work late into the second century. First, the text reflects a type of Gnosticism...that wasn't prevalent until the middle second century.

Additionally, the Gospel of Thomas demonstrates a deep dependance on large parts of the New Testament. It quotes or alludes to all four Gospels, Acts, most of Paul's letters, and Revelation. Only someone who had access to all these works could pen this work, and we know that it took time for these works to circulate the Roman Empire. Even more, some scholars suggest that Thomas relied heavily on the *Diatessaron* — a four Gospel harmony produced by Tatian around AD 170. If that's the case, Thomas dates even later.

Even if Thomas is independent of the *Diatessaron*, it's mid-second century dating would have ruled it out for canonical consideration. Take the *Shepherd of Hermas* — a mid-second century work — for example. The early church loved this book. But as the *Muratorian Fragment* states, the church rejected its canonical authority because it was written "quite recently, in our own times," and thus not backed by apostolic authority.

Divine Qualities?

Does Thomas show God's fingerprints and align with other authoritative books? Again, the answer is no. Thomas was one of several Gnostic texts in the Nag Hammadi discovery.

Gnosticism was polytheistic. It taught that the god who created the world was evil, and by extension, his entire creation was evil too. Salvation, then, was the liberation of the soul from the physical realm into a spiritual realm. One can achieve this salvation only through a secret knowledge (gnosis in Greek).

This secret knowledge, according to the Gnostics, comes from Jesus. Of course, Jesus was radically different from the god of the Old Testament. Jesus was a warm and inviting god while the one of the Old Testament was hostile and angry.

Furthermore, since everything physical is evil, Jesus didn't really have a physical body. He only appeared to have a human body, and thus he didn't die on the cross — a view known as Docetism. [We will look at this more completely later under *Christology-Docetism*, p. 51, 53)

The Gospel of Thomas makes no qualms about its Gnostic leanings with all its emphasis on learning the secrets of Jesus. The prologue begins, "These are the secret sayings that the living Jesus spoke." Moreover, the first saying states, "Whoever discovers the interpretation of these sayings will not taste death." Again, the Gnostic salvation came through obtaining a secret knowledge.

Of course, the early church rejected Gnosticism as heretical. Orthodoxy taught salvation by faith. Thomas taught salvation came through knowledge of secret information.

Thomas also veers away from orthodoxy in how it views women. At the close of the book, Jesus states, "Look, I will guide her (Mary) to make her male, so that she too may become a living spirit resembling you males. For every female who makes herself

male will enter the kingdom of Heaven."...

Corporate Reception?

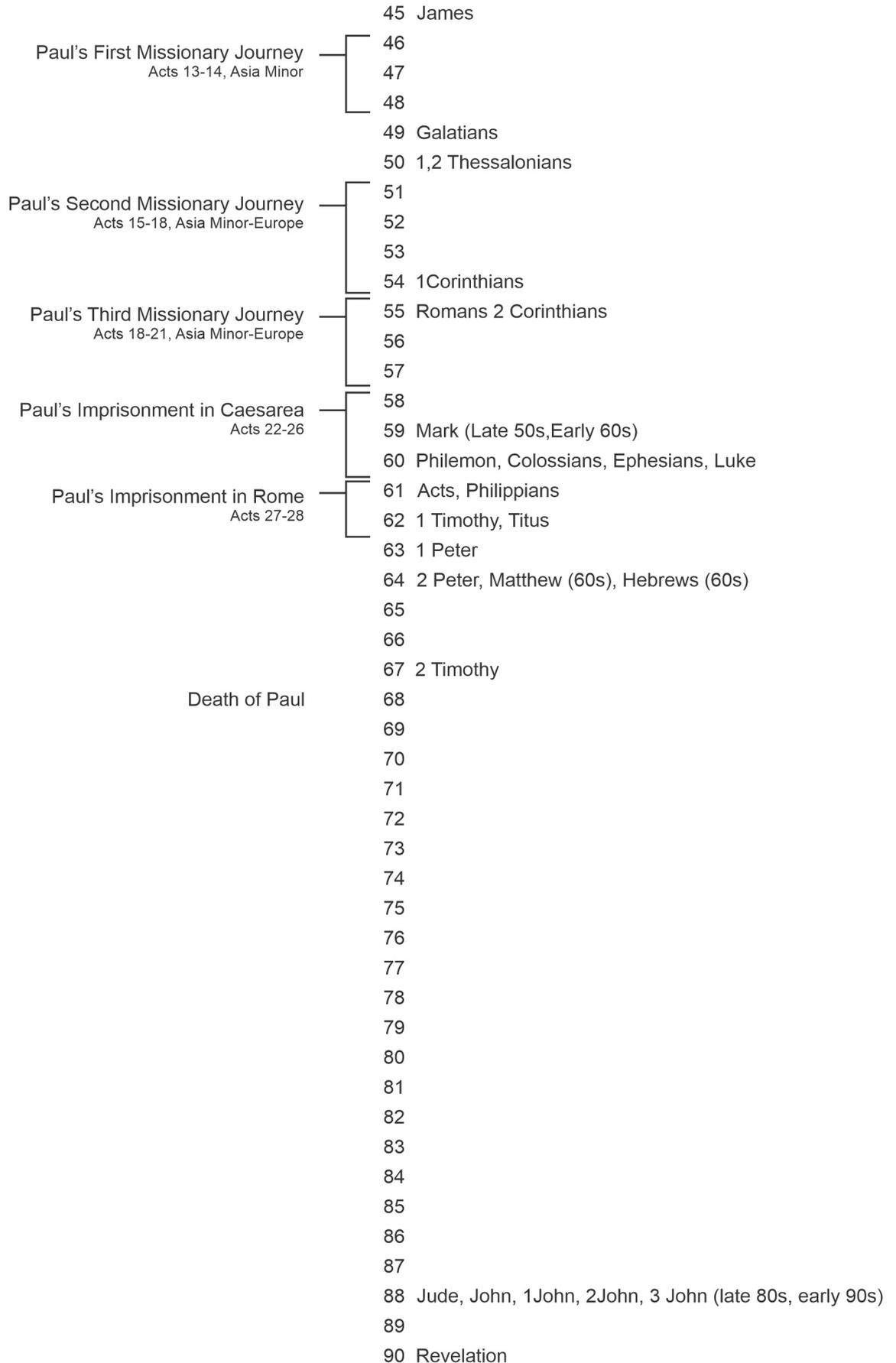
Did the universal church affirm the authority of Thomas? There's not a shred of evidence to suggest that it did. If you think about it, since Thomas lacks the first two attributes – apostolic authority and divine qualities – the early church had no motivation to think it was Scripture... First, the early church never includes Thomas in any of its early canonical lists. In all the lists, we have four, and only four, Gospels. Second, the church specifically rejected Thomas as heretical. Meaning, it didn't even come close. This rejection is contrasted with other books, like the *Shepherd of Hermas* or the *Didache (The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles)*, that at least gained a hearing. The church enjoyed these books as they promoted Christian orthodoxy, but as I alluded to earlier, the church didn't receive them as Scripture because they lacked apostolic authority.

Thomas was so far out in left field that it wasn't even up for discussion. Eusebius, for example, includes Thomas in the "heretical books" section and suggests that it "ought not to be reckoned even among the spurious books but discarded as impious and absurd."

The Gospel of Thomas Rejected

Despite the best efforts of some, Thomas doesn't even come close to Scripture. It wasn't backed by apostolic authority. Its contents contradict the orthodox texts. And the church never even came close to considering it as authoritative.

Time Line of New Testament Books



• Theology Proper

There were no outstanding issues concerning the nature of God during this time period.

• Christology

Gnosticism

§137 We will be looking at Gnosticism more thoroughly in the next church age of Smyrna, (see p. 97) but refer to it now because of the groundwork laid out for dealing with it in the Bible. The earliest church leaders, Basilides (teaching *c.* 113) and Valentinus (teaching *c.* 140), introduced Gnosticism as a movement in the 2nd century. While Paul and John addressed

specific Gnostic teachings, it is important to note that the fully developed Gnostic systems had not yet fully emerged during their lifetimes. These ideas were *present* in the cultural and religious context of the apostles' time, though.

§138 In the writings of Paul, particularly in his letters to the Colossians and the Corinthians, he addresses various philosophical and spiritual challenges which included syncretistic tendencies, the worship of angels, and the devaluation of the physical body in favor of a more spiritual realm.

§139 It is also important to note that since Gnosticism is a speculative philosophy. From one Gnostic to another there will be variations.

§140 Similarly, the apostle John, in his writings, particularly in the Gospel of John and the First Epistle of John, responds to certain teachings that questioned the full humanity and deity of Jesus Christ and the significance of His physical incarnation. These teachings had elements of a dualistic worldview that separated the spiritual realm from the material world (see also p. 28, 106). The term "*pre-gnosticism*" is also used to describe these earlier philosophical and religious ideas that laid the groundwork for later Gnostic developments but did not constitute full-blown Gnosticism as it emerged in the 2nd century AD (see p. 97).

Docetism

§141 The first attacks against Christ were not in regard to his deity, but His humanity in the doctrine of *Docetism*. The word comes from the Greek word *dokein*, which means "to seem" or "to appear." Docetism was primarily associated with a group of early Christian sects that held the belief that Jesus Christ only *appeared* to have a physical body, but in reality, he was purely divine and did not possess a true human nature. According to this perspective, Jesus' physical body and suffering were mere

The Big Idea:

By the end of the Ephesian age, the false teachers focused on the nature of Christ. This will be one of the major issues of the church into the next age.

illusions or phantoms.

§142 The roots of Docetism can be traced to various influences, including Gnostic thought and Hellenistic philosophy. Because of the Gnostic idea that the material world was inherently evil, they believed that Jesus, being divine, could not have taken on a physical body. Also, the Platonic idea of the inherent imperfection and corruptibility of the material realm led some early Christian thinkers to view the physical body as a hindrance to the spiritual nature of Jesus.

§143 Ignatius of Antioch (35-108 AD) referred to Docetic teachings in his *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*)

Chapter V.—Their dangerous errors.

Some ignorantly deny Him, or rather have been denied by Him, being the advocates of death rather than of the truth. These persons neither have the prophets persuaded, nor the law of Moses, nor the Gospel even to this day, nor the sufferings we have individually endured. For they think also the same thing regarding us. For what does any one profit me, if he commends me, but blasphemes my Lord, **not confessing that He was [truly] possessed of a body? But he who does not acknowledge this, has in fact altogether denied Him**, being enveloped in death. I have not, however, thought good to write the names of such persons, inasmuch as they are unbelievers. Yea, far be it from me to make any mention of them, until they repent and return to [a true belief in] Christ's passion, which is our resurrection.

...

I give you these instructions, beloved, assured that ye also hold the same opinions [as I do]. But I guard you beforehand from these beasts in the shape of men, from whom you must not only turn away, but even flee from them. Only you must pray for them, if by any means they may be brought to repentance. **For if the Lord were in the body in appearance only, and were crucified in appearance only, then am I also bound in appearance only.** And why have I also surrendered myself to death, to fire, to the sword, to the wild beasts? But, [in fact,] I endure all things for Christ, not in appearance only, but in reality, that I may suffer together with Him, while He Himself inwardly strengthens me; for of myself I have no such ability.
(Ignatius of Antioch 35-108 AD *Epistle to the Smyrnaeans*)

§144 Irenaeus (130-202 AD) in *Against Heresies*, Book III, Ch. 11, relates that John sought by proclamation of his gospel "to remove that error which by Cerinthus [active 50-100 AD] had been disseminated among men" He described further how the Gospel of John had other key aspects that were in response to Cerinthus. In this way, the purpose of John's Gospel was to promote the divinity of Christ, according to Irenaeus, *especially* because of the heresies of Cerinthus.

§145 Cerinthus held distinctive beliefs that were countered by John in his Gospel. While acknowledging Jewish scripture and claiming allegiance to the God of the Hebrews, Cerinthus deviated in significant ways. He denied that the world was created by the Supreme Being, attributing its creation instead to a lesser power called the Demiurge. This Demiurge was seen as separate from and ignorant of the existence of the Supreme God.

§146 Cerinthus used the term "demiurge" in alignment with the Platonic philosophical schools prevalent in the eastern Mediterranean which had an influence on Hellenistic Judaism. Notably, Cerinthus did not consider the Demiurge to be evil, unlike certain other Gnostic groups. His view of the Demiurge resembled Philo's concept of

the logos, rather than the egotistical demiurge espoused later by Valentinus (100-180 AD), another prevalent Gnostic false teacher.

§147 Regarding Jesus, Cerinthus distinguished between the man Jesus and the Christ. He rejected the notion of a supernatural virgin birth and taught that Jesus was the biological son of Joseph and Mary. Similar to the Ebionites, Cerinthus taught *Adoptionism*. During Jesus' baptism, *the Christ*, represented by a dove, descended upon him, signifying an act of adoption. *The Christ* then departed from Jesus prior to his crucifixion, no longer being present in physical form. Cerinthus anticipated the development of Christian Gnosticism (p. 97) by presenting Christ as a spiritual being originating from heaven, carrying out a divine mission in the material world, and subsequently departing. Irenaeus classified Cerinthus among those Gnostics who denied that Jesus is the Logos or Word.

He taught that the visible world and heavens were not made by the supreme being, but by a lesser power (Demiurge, literally *craftsman*, a Platonic view) distinct from him. He taught that this power was ignorant of the existence of the Supreme God.

Specifically in the Gospel of John and 1,2 John we see Scripture that clearly responded to this view.

1John 2:21-24 I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

22Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

23Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: *(but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*

24Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

1John 4:1-3 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

2Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

3And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

2John 1:7-11 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.

8Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

9Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

10If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed:

11For he that biddeth him God speed is partaker of his evil deeds.

John 1:1-14 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

2The same was in the beginning with God.

3All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

4In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

5And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

6There was a man sent from God, whose name *was* John.

7The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all *men* through him might believe.

8He was not that Light, but *was sent* to bear witness of that Light.

9*That* was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

10He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not.

11He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

12But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, *even* to them that believe on his name:

13Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

14And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

Ebionism

§148 The Ebionites were a Jewish Christian sect that emerged in the early centuries of Christianity from roughly the 1st to the 4th centuries AD. The name is derived from the Greek word *Ebion*, which means *poor* or *poor ones*. The exact origin of the name and its connection to the group of Jewish Christians known as the Ebionites is not entirely clear.

One possible explanation is that the name "Ebionites" was used by their opponents or critics to describe them disparagingly, highlighting their perceived poverty or lack of doctrinal understanding.

Another possibility is that the Ebionites themselves adopted the name to emphasize their commitment to simplicity and poverty as a reflection of the teachings and example of Jesus. They may have seen themselves as living in accordance with Jesus' teachings on renunciation and simplicity, similar to the notion of being "poor in spirit" found in the Beatitudes.

§149 They adhered to a form of Jewish Christianity that emphasized the observance of Jewish law and customs. They believed in Jesus as a purely human Messiah but did not accept his divinity or his pre-existence as the Son of God. Instead, they regarded Jesus as a human prophet and emphasized his teachings on social justice and ethical living. They believed He was chosen by God and anointed with the Holy Spirit at his baptism, thereby becoming the Son of God. Some Ebionites believed that "the Christ" departed from Jesus before His death and resurrection. (See *Adoptionism* in Docetism, p. 51, 53)

§150 Over time, the Ebionite movement began to decline, and its influence waned. By the 4th century, with the rise of the Christian Roman Empire and the effect of the

Nicene council, Ebionism had largely disappeared. The teachings and writings of the Ebionites did not receive widespread acceptance and were deemed heretical by the dominant Christian authorities.

• Pneumatology

Mysticism and the ministry of the Holy Spirit

§151 A mystical experience is a profound and deeply spiritual encounter that transcends ordinary human consciousness, providing a direct connection with the divine, or a heightened state of awareness and understanding. An emphasis on the emotional over the intellectual makes people susceptible to trying to induce such an experience and a penchant for interpreting their imaginations as divine directives. Such groups included:

- Montanism (2nd Century, p. 100)
- Desert Fathers and Mothers (4th-6th Centuries)
- Beguines and Beghards (12th-13th Centuries)
- Mystics of the Rhineland (13th-14th Centuries, p. 157)
- Dionysius the Areopagite (Late 5th to early 6th Century)

§152 It would be expected that such a profound experience would have a major emphasis on the New Testament. The closest experience is when a divine encounter was associated *occasionally* with the inspiration of God. On the few times that Scriptures were given by direct communication from God it was not with a mystical experience with a "divine knowing." The most clear teaching against such experience is given in 1Cor 14 where it is plainly said that the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

1Cor 14:32 And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.

§153 Speaking in tongues provided the most relevant context for understanding the work of the Holy Spirit with respect to mysticism, but it served a completely different purpose than what people think today. It was used as a sign to the Jews to confirm the claims of the Gospel in the new Dispensation. We will discuss this further under *The Elect (the Jews) – The Relationship between Judaism and the church* on page 81, 84. We should notice that throughout Church history, there is a tendency to emphasize the *phenomena* over the *noumena*, or, how we *perceive* reality vs. reality *itself*. The emphasis has been on the *mystical experience* instead of what God is *really* doing. The purpose of the Holy Spirit was convicting and informing, not to provide an emotional experience.

§154 The false notion of the experiential can be seen today not only in a modern charismatic setting, but also in modern contemplative prayer and spiritual "centering."

§155 In Christian spirituality, the concept of "centering" refers to a contemplative practice that aims to foster a deep and intimate connection with God. It is a method of prayer and meditation that involves quieting the mind, stilling distractions, and directing one's attention and intention towards a focused experience of God's presence.

Centering prayer, as it is often called, typically involves choosing a sacred word or phrase (known as a "mantra" or "prayer word") and repeating it silently or softly. The purpose of the mantra is to provide a point of focus and help anchor the mind, allowing it to settle into a state of openness and receptivity to the divine.

During centering prayer, the practitioner seeks to let go of thoughts, concerns, and external distractions, surrendering them to God's presence. It is a practice of simply being in God's presence, cultivating an attitude of openness, surrender, and listening. The aim is to move beyond active thinking or seeking specific outcomes and to be receptive to the presence and guidance of God.

Centering prayer finds its roots in ancient Christian contemplative traditions, drawing inspiration from the teachings of Christian mystics and monastic practices. It shares similarities with other forms of meditative prayer found in various religious and spiritual traditions, emphasizing the inner silence and stillness as a means of encountering the divine.

The work of the Holy Spirit is presented differently in the New Testament.

Acts 1:8 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

People might look at the idea of power as an energy to be experienced, but Jesus had carefully and extensively told them the kind of power the Holy Spirit would provide. It is commonly said that there is power in knowledge and that is exactly what kind of power Jesus described.

John 14:15-17 If ye love me, keep my commandments.

16And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever;

17*Even* the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.

John 14:26 But the Comforter, *which is* the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

John 15:26-27 But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me:

27And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.

John 16:7-14 Nevertheless I tell you the truth; It is expedient for you that I go away: for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I depart, I will send him unto you.

8And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

9Of sin, because they believe not on me;
10Of righteousness, because I go to my Father, and ye see me no more;
11Of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged.
12I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now.
13Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth:
for he shall not speak of himself; but whatsoever he shall hear, *that* shall he
speak: and he will shew you things to come.
14He shall glorify me: for he shall receive of mine, and shall shew *it* unto you.

This is why it is so objectionable when people try to avoid God and His righteousness by claiming that they are spiritual, thinking that that is noble, respectable, and sufficient. In reality it is merely emotional and shallow. To truly be spiritual is to care about what God *really* thinks. This is what the work of God is all about, to have power through knowing God *as He defines Himself and wants to be known*.

The end of inspiration

Over the course of church history, people continually made claims that they had new revelation by the Spirit. Upon completion of the canon the work of inspiration for revelation from God would cease. This was explained in *The completion of the inspired text* on p. 45.

• Anthropology

There were no outstanding issues concerning the nature of man during this time period.

The foundational issues presented in the New Testament included:

Tripartite constitution

Keeping in mind the tripartite constitution of man will be critical to appreciate the difficulties the church had dealing with the practice of sin after salvation. By *tripartite* we understand that man is made up of three parts: body, soul, and spirit. This will be critical for dealing with the problem of confusion between salvation and sanctification. It is possible for a person to be born again with a new spirit and thus saved eternally and yet sin in this lifetime because we are fleshly creatures with a soul also.

- We are born again *spiritually*.
John 3:1-8 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:
2The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.
3Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.
4Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

5Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and *of* the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

6That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

7Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

8The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

- All things are new in the new birth:

2Cor 5:14-17 For the love of Christ constraineth us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:

15And *that* he died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.

16Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we *him* no more.

17Therefore if any man *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

- In the new birth we are made righteous.

2Cor 5:21 For he hath made him *to be* sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

- The body is *dead*, that is in a corrupted state of sinfulness.

Rom 8:5-11 For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.

6For to be carnally minded *is* death; but to be spiritually minded *is* life and peace.

7Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

9But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.

10And if Christ *be* in you, the body *is* dead because of sin; but the Spirit *is* life because of righteousness.

11But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you.

- The fight we have with temptation is always described as between the spirit and the flesh, but there is another component that is clearly recognized in the Bible. We also have a soul. Paul prays for the *sanctification* of *body, soul, and spirit*. He does not pray for their salvation, but that each be used for God's glory.

1Thess 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and *I pray God* your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

- The grammar of 1Thess 5:23 requires that each one is distinct from each other which is supported by Heb 4:12.

Heb 4:12 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.

Just as the joints and marrow can be separated, so also can the soul and spirit.

- It is in this sense that we are unable to sin in 1John 3:9. The part of us that was born again in righteousness was the spirit.

1John 3:9 Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

- The same John acknowledges in 1John 1:8-10 that we do indeed sin, so the inability to sin can only be explained in terms of the righteous born again spirit.

1John 1:8-10 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

9If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

10If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

• **Hamartiology**

There were no outstanding issues concerning the sin during this time period. The foundational issues presented in the New Testament included:

Sin is a matter of the heart

Sin is defined by Christ as a matter of the heart, not the outward appearance.

Matt 5:27-28 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery:

28But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

Matt 15:8-9 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from me.

9But in vain they do worship me, teaching *for* doctrines the commandments of

men.

Matt 15:10-20 And he called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

11Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

12Then came his disciples, and said unto him, Knowest thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

13But he answered and said, Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

14Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15Then answered Peter and said unto him, Declare unto us this parable.

16And Jesus said, Are ye also yet without understanding?

17Do not ye yet understand, that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught?

18But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man.

19For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

20These are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashen hands defileth not a man.

Depravity

What do we mean by *total depravity*? Total depravity is the Biblical teaching that human beings since the Fall have inherited the sin nature of Adam in such a way that absolutely everything about them is affected by sin.

This does not mean every person is as sinful as they could possibly be. It does mean, though, that every part of a person has been corrupted including the heart, mind, will, affections, desires, critical thinking, (see, for example, Gen. 6:5, 8:21,

Jeremiah 17:9 The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Psalms 53:1-3 To the chief Musician upon Mahalath, Maschil, *A Psalm* of David. The fool hath said in his heart, *There is* no God. Corrupt are they, and have done abominable iniquity: *there is* none that doeth good.

2God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were *any* that did understand, that did seek God.

3Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; *there is* none that doeth good, no, not one.

Romans 3:10-18 As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one:

11There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. **[No one on their own without the convicting ministry of the Holy Spirit]**

12They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there

is none that doeth good, no, not one.

13 Their throat *is* an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps *is* under their lips:

14 Whose mouth *is* full of cursing and bitterness:

15 Their feet *are* swift to shed blood:

16 Destruction and misery *are* in their ways:

17 And the way of peace have they not known:

18 There is no fear of God before their eyes.

Romans 8:7-8 Because the carnal mind *is* enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be.

8 So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.

Ephesians 2:1 And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins;

John 8:34 Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.

John 3:19 And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

The problem that we will encounter in our examination over the course of church history is whether total depravity means *total inability* to choose. A common argument is that when a person is *dead in trespasses and sins* he is unable, as a dead man, able to do *anything*. Yet in Romans 8:5-11 we see that our bodies *are* indeed dead because of sin but still very active.

• Soteriology

The Judaizers

There will be more to be said about the progression from a Judaistic to an international character of the church later under *The Relationship between Judaism and the church* on p. 81. Here, we want to look specifically at how the Judaizers' view of the Mosaic Law was an early challenge to the Gospel message of salvation by grace.

The Judaizers were different than the Ebionites (p. 54). The Judaizers were individuals or groups within early Christianity who believed that Gentile converts to Christianity should also observe Jewish laws and customs, particularly circumcision and adherence to the Mosaic law (see a little more on p. 85 about Jewish proselytes). They argued that Gentile believers needed to become Jewish before fully embracing the Christian faith. The issue of Judaizing was a significant point of contention within the early Christian community, as it clashed with the teachings of the apostle Paul and the decisions of the Council of Jerusalem (as recorded in the book of Acts 15).

The Ebionites, on the other hand, were a distinct sect within early Jewish Christianity. They were Jewish Christians who retained a strong commitment to Jewish law and customs. They believed in Jesus as the Messiah but rejected his divinity and his

pre-existence as the Son of God. The Ebionites held that Jesus was a human prophet and emphasized his teachings on social justice and ethical living. They also adhered to strict observance of the Mosaic law, including circumcision and dietary restrictions.

While there are similarities in terms of their emphasis on Jewish customs and observance, the Ebionites and the Judaizers differed in their specific beliefs about Jesus and their overall theological positions. The Judaizers focused on requiring Gentile converts to conform to Jewish practices, while the Ebionites were a distinct Jewish Christian group with their own theological views about Jesus' nature and teachings.

The first rumblings about retaining a Jewish character in the church was in Acts 11

Acts 11:1-4 And the apostles and brethren that were in Judaea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God.

2And when Peter was come up to Jerusalem, they that were of the circumcision contended with him,

3Saying, Thou wentest in to men uncircumcised, and didst eat with them.

4But Peter rehearsed *the matter* from the beginning, and expounded *it* by order unto them, saying,

The Jews were satisfied with the inclusion of the Gentiles without first being circumcised after they heard Peter's testimony.

Acts 11:18 When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life.

After Paul's first missionary trip, when he got back to Antioch, they encountered the Judaizing teachers and it was "determined" that they should go the apostles in Jerusalem for counsel.

Acts 15:1-3 And certain men which came down from Judaea taught the brethren, *and said*, Except ye be circumcised after the manner of Moses, ye cannot be saved.

2When therefore Paul and Barnabas had no small dissension and disputation with them, they determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

3And being brought on their way by the church, they passed through Phenice and Samaria, declaring the conversion of the Gentiles: and they caused great joy unto all the brethren.

Paul and Barnabas were happily received at Jerusalem where they reported their missionary work among the Gentiles. This prompted the Judaizers to make their demands.

Acts 15:4-6 And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and *of* the apostles and elders, and they declared all things that God had done with them.

5But there rose up certain of the sect of the Pharisees which believed, saying, That it was needful to circumcise them, and to command *them* to keep the law

of Moses.

6And the apostles and elders came together for to consider of this matter.

Peter rose up and told them, now for the second time, about God's endorsement of the Gentiles baptism without Jewish proselytism (the significance of Tongues as a sign for this effect will be discussed under *The Relationship between Judaism and the church*, p. 81).

Acts 15:7-31 And when there had been much disputing, **Peter rose up, and said unto them, Men *and* brethren, ye know how that a good while ago God made choice among us, that the Gentiles by my mouth should hear the word of the gospel, and believe.**

8And God, which knoweth the hearts, bare them witness, giving them the Holy Ghost, even as *he did* unto us;

9And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith.

10Now therefore why tempt ye God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?

11But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they.

12Then all the multitude kept silence, and gave audience to **Barnabas and Paul, declaring what miracles and wonders God had wrought among the Gentiles by them.**

13And after they had held their peace, **James answered**, saying, Men *and* brethren, hearken unto me:

14Simeon hath declared how God at the first did visit the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for his name.

15And to this agree the words of the prophets; as it is written,

16After this I will return, and will build again the tabernacle of David, which is fallen down; and I will build again the ruins thereof, and I will set it up:

17That the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles, upon whom my name is called, saith the Lord, who doeth all these things.

18Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world.

19Wherefore my sentence is, that we trouble not them, which from among the Gentiles are turned to God:

20But that we write unto them, that they abstain from pollutions of idols, and *from* fornication, and *from* things strangled, and *from* blood.

21For Moses of old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every sabbath day.

22Then pleased it the apostles and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch with Paul and Barnabas; *namely*, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren:

23And they wrote *letters* by them after this manner; The apostles and elders and brethren *send* greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch and Syria and Cilicia:

24Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, *Ye must be*

circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no *such* commandment:
25It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,
26Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.
27**We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell *you* the same things by mouth.**
28**For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;**
29**That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.**
30**So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:**
31***Which* when they had read, they rejoiced for the consolation.**

This, of course was not the end of the problem. The Judaizers affected the churches of Galatia, prompting Paul to write the great letter that supports eternal security and that salvation is not a function of good works.

Gal 1:6-7 I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:
7Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Gal 3:1-21 O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?
2This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
3Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?
4Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if *it be* yet in vain.
5He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, *doeth he it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?
6**Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**
7**Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of Abraham.**
8And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, *saying*, In thee shall all nations be blessed.
9**So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.**
10For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, **Cursed *is* every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.**
11**But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, *it is* evident: for, The just shall live by faith.**

12And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them.

13Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed *is* every one that hangeth on a tree:

14That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

15Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though *it be* but a man's covenant, yet *if it be* confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto.

16Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ.

17And this I say, *that* the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

18For if the inheritance *be* of the law, *it is* no more of promise: but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

19Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; *and it was* ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

20Now a mediator is not *a mediator* of one, but God is one.

21Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

James and Paul on works and faith

§156 From the time of the Reformation, some theologians suggest a conflict between Paul and James regarding the relationship between faith and works as presented by Paul and James. Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and others use James in particular to justify depending on works to maintain salvation. The issue of salvation by faith alone would grow until it exploded by Luther and the Reformation use of the term *sola gratia, sola fide* (only by grace, only by faith, p. 213).

§157 In James, we have to note the specific language that is used as he described the *kind* of faith that saves. The faith that saves is *accompanied* by works. A faith that does not produce works is dead.

§158 In the early church, there was no dispute about the distinction between faith which saves and works which is a manifestation of saving faith. Within this time period we have the writing of Clement of Rome who died about 99 AD. He was the fourth pastor at the church of Rome and is recognized by the Roman Catholic Church as the 4th Pope. Early Christian leaders speculated and wondered if this was the same Clement Paul referred to in Philippians 4:3. At any rate, in his epistle to the Corinthians he captured the essence of James *and* Paul which is a reflection of the understanding that Christianity had about the proper works/faith relationship the church had by the end of this time period.

Seeing, therefore, that we are the portion of the Holy One, let us do all those things which pertain to holiness, avoiding all evil-speaking, all abominable and impure embraces, together with all drunkenness, seeking after change, all abominable lusts, detestable adultery, and execrable pride. "For God," saith [the Scripture], "resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble." Let us cleave, then, to those to whom grace has

been given by God. **Let us clothe ourselves with concord and humility, ever exercising self-control, standing far off from all whispering and evil-speaking, being justified by our works, and not our words. For [the Scripture] saith, "He that speaketh much, shall also hear much in answer. And does he that is ready in speech deem himself righteous?** Blessed is he that is born of woman, who liveth but a short time: be not given to much speaking." Let our praise be in God, and not of ourselves; for God hateth those that commend themselves. **Let testimony to our good deeds be borne by others,** as it was in the case of our righteous forefathers. Boldness, and arrogance, and audacity belong to those that are accursed of God; but moderation, humility, and meekness to such as are blessed by Him. **[These phrases are similar to James 1:18 that our works and not our words should be a testimony of our faith]**

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https://ccel.org/ccel/clement_rome/first_epistle_to_the_corinthians/anf01.ii.ii.xxx.html

And we, too, being called by His will in Christ Jesus, are not justified by ourselves, nor by our own wisdom, or understanding, or godliness, or works which we have wrought in holiness of heart; but by that faith through which, from the beginning, Almighty God has justified all men; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen. [Lest there be any question of Clement's understanding, he declares plainly that it is only the faith part of the faith/works relationship that saves.]

– https://ccel.org/ccel/clement_rome/first_epistle_to_the_corinthians/anf01.ii.ii.xxxii.html

Imputation

§159 There are several concerns over the concept of *imputation*, where one is credited with a quality of someone else. Imputation is involved with bringing a charge against someone. In general legal terms, "imputation" refers to the act of ascribing or attributing something to someone, often in the context of responsibility, liability, or guilt for a particular action or event. It involves associating an individual with a certain act or consequence.

§160 Example: A Hit-and-Run Accident.

Suppose there is a hit-and-run accident in which a pedestrian is seriously injured by a car, but the driver flees the scene without stopping to provide aid or report the incident to the authorities. The police conduct an investigation to identify the responsible driver.

During the investigation, they find the car involved in the accident parked outside John's house. John is the registered owner of the vehicle. Based on this information, the police impute responsibility for the hit-and-run accident to John, as he is the registered owner of the car involved.

In this example, "imputation" is the process of attributing responsibility for the hit-and-run accident to John based on his ownership of the car involved. However, it's essential to note that imputation does not necessarily mean John is the actual driver responsible for the accident. Imputation is about associating responsibility with someone based on certain circumstances or facts, but it may not always accurately reflect the total truth.

In legal proceedings, imputation can play a role in determining liability, guilt, or responsibility, but it's crucial to consider all the evidence and factors before arriving at a conclusion.

§161 Imputation is used in Soteriology to describe the forensic (or logical legal) process where a declaration is made regarding *righteousness*. Just as responsibility was

imputed by a logical process in the hit and run accident, righteousness was *imputed* by a legal process where God *logically* counts faith in Christ for righteousness. When we placed our faith in Christ, we were *counted* as righteous because God's principle was that Christ died to take our punishment for sin, therefore our debt has been *legally* paid and we are made free according to the law.

Rom 4:2-8 For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath *whereof* to glory; but not before God.

3For what saith the scripture? **Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness.**

4Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

5But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

6Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works,

7*Saying*, Blessed *are* they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered.

8Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin.

Rom 4:16-25 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* by grace; to the end the promise might be sure to all the seed; not to that only which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith of Abraham; who is the father of us all,

17(As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations,) before him whom he believed, *even* God, who quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not as though they were.

18Who against hope believed in hope, that he might become the father of many nations; according to that which was spoken, So shall thy seed be.

19And being not weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, when he was about an hundred years old, neither yet the deadness of Sarah's womb:

20He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God;

21And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

22And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness.

23Now it was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him;

24But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead;

25Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.

§162 We *inherited* the *effect* of death due to the sin nature of Adam. We inherited the sin *nature* of Adam. This nature was not *imputed to us*.

Rom 5:12-14 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

13(For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

14Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

Rom 5:21 That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.

§163 We become *guilty* of our own sinfulness when we come to the point of the *awareness* of our sin. Neither is *Adam's guilt* imputed to us. This is alluded to in several places in the Bible. It is described as an age of inability.

The prophecy about the birth of Christ

Isa 7:14-16 Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

15Butter and honey shall he eat, that he may know to refuse the evil, and choose the good.

16For before the child shall know to refuse the evil, and choose the good, the land that thou abhorrest shall be forsaken of both her kings.

The judgment for following the 10 spies who discouraged Israel from entering the Promised Land

Deut 1:35-39 Surely there shall not one of these men of this evil generation see that good land, which I swear to give unto your fathers,

36Save Caleb the son of Jephunneh; he shall see it, and to him will I give the land that he hath trodden upon, and to his children, because he hath wholly followed the LORD.

37Also the LORD was angry with me for your sakes, saying, Thou also shalt not go in thither.

38But Joshua the son of Nun, which standeth before thee, he shall go in thither: encourage him: for he shall cause Israel to inherit it.

39Moreover your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, and your children, which in that day had no knowledge between good and evil, they shall go in thither, and unto them will I give it, and they shall possess it.

The children of Nineveh who did not know their right hand from their left

Jonah 4:11 And should not I spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and *also* much cattle? **[Here, they are classed with cattle who have no moral capacity.]**

The children brought to Christ to bless

Matt 19:13-14 Then were there brought unto him little children, that he should put *his* hands on them, and pray: and the disciples rebuked them.

14But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

§164 The issue of imputation will take a turn in the 5th century suggesting that we not only inherit Adam's sin nature, but the idea that his *guilt* is imputed, or laid to our charge, will be introduced. This will be used as an explanation as to how infants need to be saved which will then be coupled with baptism as a means of salvation in order to justify infant baptism. Augustine will confuse salvation and sanctification in an argument with Pelagius (p. 124).

• Ecclesiology

Independent autonomy of each church

§165 The doctrine of the *church* was introduced by Jesus Christ when He addressed the Apostles on who they thought He was.

The Big Idea:
Independent churches, not a universal was the rule.

Matt 16:13-19 When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

14And they said, Some *say that thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

15He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

16And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

17And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

18And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

19And 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.

§166 The church was a new development in this Dispensation. The Jews, because of the Diaspora (described in the footnote on p. 40), had developed the *synagogue* for meeting for prayer and study. As such, it did not have a distinct mission. The Jews, in general, knew that as a nation they served a missionary purpose to the Gentiles. When Christ taught them that He would be building His church, He was bringing in a new concept. The idea of a church was established by the influence of the Hellenic (Greek) culture to operate as a town council in the Greek free city-states. A church had a business sense to it accompanied by a mission statement. The *ekklesia* of the free city-

states were independent of each other.

§167 That there was no, one church is seen in the fact that the spiritual *ekklesia* were identified by their location; such as the church of the cities of Ephesus, Colosse, and Thessalonica, but the churches of the regions of Galatia and Judea.

§168 The council of Jerusalem had been called to advise the church of Antioch on the matter of the Judaizers (see p. 61 and *The process of the inclusion of the Gentiles* and p. 83 and following). They exercised no authority over the church but only made their recommendation to them.

§169 The independence of the early churches was maintained during this church age. As the next age dawned, the importance of spiritual unity became a pressure to promote ecclesiastical unity.

Rome was not established as the See of Peter and the seat of the Roman Catholic Church

§170 There is no Biblical evidence that Peter was ever in Rome. Paul, at the end of the book of Romans, explains that he hoped to go to Rome to work there but would not do so in a place where someone else had already laid a foundation.

The Big Idea:
Historical records affirm that Peter was not the first pope in Rome.

Rom 15:20-24 Yea, so have I strived to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build upon another man's foundation:

21But as it is written, To whom he was not spoken of, they shall see: and they that have not heard shall understand.

22For which cause also I have been much hindered from coming to you.

23But now having no more place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come unto you;

24Whensoever I take my journey into Spain, I will come to you: for I trust to see you in my journey, and to be brought on my way thitherward by you, if first I be somewhat filled with your *company*.

Peter evidently had ministered as the Apostle to the Jews (the circumcision) in the east, as mentioned before, where there was a significant Jewish Diaspora presence. There is no reason that his reference to greetings from the church at Babylon was code language for Rome.

§171 Although we usually demonstrate from the Scriptures that Peter was not the first bishop of Rome, we see this affirmed by the historical record.

§172 Irenaeus (c. 130–202 AD), in his work "Against Heresies" (*Adversus Haereses*), written around 180 AD, mentions Linus as the first successor of Peter in the episcopal office in Rome. But, he states that Linus was ordained by Paul and Peter jointly.

Eusebius of Caesarea (c. 260–340 AD) in his "Ecclesiastical History," written in the early 4th century, also records the tradition that Linus was ordained by Paul as the first

bishop of Rome.

Tertullian (c. 155–240 AD) in his "Prescription Against the Heretics" (*De Praescriptione Haereticorum*), written around 200 AD, mentions that Linus was appointed by Paul as the first bishop of Rome. He also referred to Peter ordaining Clement as the third

bishop for the church at Rome, but he does not suggest that he did so as its Pastor.⁵

In the *Apostolic Constitutions* (Book VII, Section 4, 4th-5th c.), Linus is recorded as ordained by Paul.

§173 There is no early evidence that Peter established Rome as the seat of the universal church by being its first bishop.

The pressure to conform

The Mystery Religions

§174 The worldwide influence of the common mystery religion elements were in competition with Christianity. Although the pressure to be adopted would come later in the Pergamos Age of the Church, the conflict was already manifest specifically present in Ephesus when Paul first appeared there.

Acts 19:22-41 So he sent into Macedonia two of them that ministered unto him, Timotheus and Erastus; but he himself stayed in Asia for a season.

23And the same time there arose no small stir about that way.

24For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen;

25Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth.

26Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands:

27So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth.

28And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

29And the whole city was filled with confusion: and having caught Gaius and Aristarchus, men of Macedonia, Paul's companions in travel, they rushed with one accord into the theatre.

30And when Paul would have entered in unto the people, the disciples suffered him not.

31And certain of the chief of Asia, which were his friends, sent unto him, desiring *him* that he would not adventure himself into the theatre.

32Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.

⁵...as the church of Smyrna, which records that Polycarp was placed therein by John; as also the church of Rome, which makes Clement to have been ordained in like manner by Peter."
https://www.tertullian.org/anf/anf03/anf03-24.htm#P3555_1210801

33And they drew Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. And Alexander beckoned with the hand, and would have made his defence unto the people.

34But when they knew that he was a Jew, all with one voice about the space of two hours cried out, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

35And when the townclerk had appeased the people, he said, *Ye* men of Ephesus, what man is there that knoweth not how that the city of the Ephesians is a worshipper of the great goddess Diana, and of the *image* which fell down from Jupiter?

36Seeing then that these things cannot be spoken against, ye ought to be quiet, and to do nothing rashly.

37For ye have brought hither these men, which are neither robbers of churches, nor yet blasphemers of your goddess.

38Wherefore if Demetrius, and the craftsmen which are with him, have a matter against any man, the law is open, and there are deputies: let them implead one another.

39But if ye enquire any thing concerning other matters, it shall be determined in a lawful assembly.

40For we are in danger to be called in question for this day's uproar, there being no cause whereby we may give an account of this concourse.

41And when he had thus spoken, he dismissed the assembly.

The Imperial Cult

§175 Not only did the pagan mystery religions compete with Christianity, there was also the Cult of Caesar.

§176 The Cult of Caesar was also known as the Imperial Cult. It was a form of religious veneration and deification of the Roman Emperor. It emerged during the early Roman Empire.

§177 The Cult of Caesar primarily involved the deification of the Roman Emperor after his death. This deification of the emperor created a strong association between the ruler and divine authority, reinforcing the idea of imperial power and the emperor's status as the supreme leader.

§178 The Cult of Caesar was not just a religious phenomenon; it had a strong political aspect as well. Paying homage to the emperor as a divine figure was considered an expression of loyalty to the Roman state. It served to promote unity among the diverse territories and peoples under Roman rule by fostering a shared reverence for the emperor and the state. Especially the reverence for the state will be familiar in the Medieval church.

§179 Christians' refusal to participate in the Imperial Cult often led to persecution and hostility from Roman authorities and fellow citizens, as it was seen as a rejection of civic duty and a threat to social cohesion. This effect was actually also felt by *pagan* religions. The spread of the Imperial Cult sometimes clashed with local religious traditions in the provinces. In some regions, local deities were incorporated into the imperial cult, leading to syncretism – the merging of religious beliefs and practices.

The influence of the Cult of Caesar was particularly strong in the eastern provinces of the Roman Empire, including areas where early Christianity was taking root. The

imperial cult's prominence in these regions made it even more challenging for Christians to maintain their distinct identity and practice their faith freely.

§180 Rome's motto concerning competition with the church later could be, "If you can't get them join you, join them and take over."

Church leadership

§181 It would be later that priests and a central authority in a Bishop would be introduced and that he would have power over a region. The leadership of the church was very specific. We see this in Paul's address to the leadership of the Ephesian church, his instruction to Timothy and Titus, and Peter's instruction to elders.

Paul instruction to the Ephesians

Acts 20:16-17 For Paul had determined to sail by Ephesus, because he would not spend the time in Asia: for he hasted, if it were possible for him, to be at Jerusalem the day of Pentecost.

17And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the **elders of the church** [*presbyteros - elder*].

Acts 20:28-29 Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you **overseers** [*episcopos - bishops*], **to feed the church of God** [*poimaino - to pastor*], which he hath purchased with his own blood.

29For I know this, that after my departing shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock.

Paul's instruction to Timothy and Titus

1Tim 3:1 This *is* a true saying, If a man desire the office of a **bishop**, he desireth a good work.

Titus 1:7 For a **bishop** must be blameless, as the steward of God; not selfwilled, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre;

Peter's instruction to elders

1Pet 5:1-3 The **elders** which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

2**Feed the flock** of God which is among you, taking the **oversight** thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

3Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

§182 Paul also describes the second office in the church, the deacons.

1Tim 3:8-13 Likewise *must* the **deacons** be grave, not doubletongued, not given

to much wine, not greedy of filthy lucre;
 9Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience.
 10And let these also first be proved; then let them use the **office of a deacon**,
 being *found* blameless.
 11Even so *must their* wives *be* grave, not slanderers, sober, faithful in all things.
 12Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their
 own houses well.
 13For they that have used the **office of a deacon** well purchase to themselves a
 good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus.

§183 The deacons' ministry was not for spiritual leadership, but for the physical ministry of the church. They were known to preach, but that was their work as Christians, not by virtue of their office as a deacon.

Acts 6:1-4 And in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations.
 2Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples *unto them*, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables.
 3Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.
 4But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word.

Sunday Worship

§184 The Lord's Day came to be the day associated with the meeting of the church.

Acts 20:7 And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight.

1Cor 16:1-2 Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye.
 2Upon the first *day* of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as *God* hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come.

§185 The meeting on the first day was reflected in later writings of the church "fathers," but by the end of the 1st century it was apparent from the writing of Ignatius:

If, therefore, those who were brought up in the ancient order of things have come to the possession of a new hope, no longer observing the Sabbath, but living in the observance of the Lord's Day, on which also our life has sprung up again by Him and by His death.

– Ignatius of Antioch 35-108 AD, Epistle to the Magnesians

Missions

§186 In the Great Commission, the believers were challenged by Christ to reach out to the world. As Jews from all over the world were saved at the Pentecost gathering, they were the first to take the Gospel out to the world as they went back home. They possibly provided some advance preparation for the their home areas to receive the Gospel.

§187 However, it would take eight years and persecution before the church and Jerusalem would truly begin to go out into the world.

Acts 8:1-8 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

3As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

4Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

5Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

6And the people with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did.

7For unclean spirits, crying with loud voice, came out of many that were possessed *with them*: and many taken with palsies, and that were lame, were healed.

8And there was great joy in that city.

§188 It is interesting that the first overtly missionary minded church was the church at Antioch. This is evidence of the symptomatic problem of the decline of the Jewish influence in the church. The church at Jerusalem needed a persecution before really sending people out. Their inertia as the traditional seat of faith didn't get overcome until Acts 10 and then it was not without causing a stir back at Jerusalem. Perhaps the Gospel was fresh in the minds of the Gentiles and they took it to heart that the only they had been saved was by missionary activity and that they then had an obligation to carry the Gospel forward (see more p. 83).

§189 Later, Paul's Macedonian Vision (Acts 16) served to break open the outreach to the entire world as the church became western in character as was discussed in *Paul vs. Peter* (p. 40).

Baptism

Baptism was specifically practiced as immersion for believers in the New Testament. The Scriptures will be twisted and theological innovations introduced

§190 That infant baptism was not known in this Ephesian

The Big Idea:
Baptism will become an issue much later and remain a problem until the Philadelphian age.

age is reflected that in the next age there was no change in the qualifications for baptism that only someone of age could fulfill. The prominent writers of the 2nd century saw repentance, faith, and instruction as necessary before baptism. It would not be until 252 AD that it would even become a question (see p. 110).

Communion

§191 Communion will become a point of contention very quickly in church history. For all the notions that will divide even relatively compatible church movements, there is actually little said about communion in the Bible. Even though it is related to the Passover sacrifice, it does not correlate directly to it since in the Passover no blood is actually drunk and the flesh of the sacrifice is eaten as well as bread.

The Big Idea:
Communion will become an issue later also and prove to be divisive even among the Reformers.

§192 Jesus downplayed the significance of the bread and wine in the Bread of Life Discourse in John 6. The Jews had asked for bread as Moses had provided manna in the wilderness. Jesus turned this around to speak of His flesh and blood, even though there was no wine mentioned by the Jews. In context, Jesus was talking about manna, not the Passover which would have been relative to His mention of flesh and blood. To show that He was not talking about communion directly, He returned back to the issue of the manna which is what they *were* asking about.

John 6:58-63 This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever.

59 These things said he in the synagogue, as he taught in Capernaum.

60 Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard *this*, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?

61 When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you?

62 *What* and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?

63 It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, *they* are spirit, and *they* are life.

§193 Nevertheless, He diminished the role of bread and wine when the disciples indicated that what He said was hard to understand. He pointed out that there was nothing of inherent spiritual benefit since the flesh was nothing, only the spirit and that it was His words that were spiritual and life giving. This is entirely in keeping with the idea of Jesus as the Logos, the Word, who gives life.

In Luke 22, Jesus identified that the Passover bread and wine was to be done in remembrance of Him, much as the Passover was done in remembrance of the Jews exodus from Egypt.

Luke 22:19-20 And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake *it*, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup *is* the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

Paul repeated this remembrance, emphasizing that this was a way to "show" the Lord's death (*katagello* - declare, preach, teach; related to *euaggelizo*, to evangelize).

1Cor 11:23-26 For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the *same* night in which he was betrayed took bread: 24And when he had given thanks, he brake *it*, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25After the same manner also *he took* the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink *it*, in remembrance of me.

26For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.

Hebrews, which relates Jesus as the fulfillment and is better than anything in the Law with its sacrifices and priesthood, mentions nothing about communion or its efficacy. In fact, Hebrews refers only to the sufficiency of the *one* sacrifice that Jesus made of Himself.

The sacrifice of Christ provides eternal redemption after it was offered in heaven

Heb 9:11-14 But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

12Neither by the blood of goats and calves, **but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.**

13For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

14How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Heb 9:19-24 For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

20Saying, This *is* the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

21Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

22And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

23*It was* therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices

than these.

24For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, *which are* the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

Christ's sacrifice was a one-time event, not to be repeated, which de-emphasizes the efficacy of any remembrance of His sacrifice

Heb 9:26-28 For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

28So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

The sacrifice of Christ was once offered and had an eternal effect on the believer

Heb 10:10-14 By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once *for all*.

11And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

12But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

13From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

14For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

Apart from the high priestly office of Christ after the order of Melchizedek to justify offering Himself as a sacrifice for our sin, there is no office of the priesthood indicated in the New Testament church.

There is a complete absence of any sense of communion as a means of sanctifying grace in the whole of the New Testament.

This is also reflected in *The Didache*, or *Teachings of the Twelve Apostles*,⁶ written between 50-120 AD for instructions to the church, gives detailed instruction concerning baptism. The absence of any detail concerning communion indicates that the simple memorial view of communion was standard:

Chapter IX.331—The Thanksgiving (Eucharist). 1. Now concerning the Thanksgiving (Eucharist), thus give thanks. 2. First, concerning 380 the cup:332 We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant,333 which Thou madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. 3. And concerning the broken *bread*:334 We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. 4. Even as this broken *bread* was scattered over the hills,335 and was gathered together and became one, so let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom;336 for Thine is the glory and the power through

⁶*The Didache* did not meet sufficient criteria to be included in the canon, although some thought it should. It appears to have been highly regarded in Egypt and Syria. While it is not canonical, it has not been lightly regarded.

Jesus Christ for ever. 5. But let no one eat or drink of your Thanksgiving (Eucharist), but they who have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord hath said, Give not that which is holy to the dogs.³ (Schaff, *Ante Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 7.)

By 100 AD, the notion of communion being Christ's body and blood started to creep in. The fact that Origen (c. 185-254 AD), Gelasius of Cyzicus (5th-6th century AD), Tertullian (c. 155-240 AD), Theodoret of Cyrus (c. 393-458 AD) held to a memorial indicates that although the notion of communion took on more significance than being a memorial was not something presupposed.

Justin Martyr, who used debated reference to communion, made specific mention of the awareness of a pagan notion of communion:

Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same thing to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed with certain incantations in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn. (Schaff, *Ante Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 1, Justin Martyr, The First Apology, Chapter LXVI.—Of the Eucharist.)

One of the earliest explicit mentions of the notion that a priest changes communion into the body and blood of the Lord does not appear until Cyril of Jerusalem (c. 313-386 AD, see p. 136). The teaching of Transubstantiation will not be defined until 1215 at the Fourth Lateran Council (p. 151).

False teachers

§194 The emphasis on the loss of the Ephesian's first love is no overstatement when compared to how early it occurred following the ministry of the apostles. By the end of the Apostolic age significant problems were emerging. We are always challenged to recognize the accumulation of *heterodoxy*, or *other beliefs* and *heteropraxy*, or *other practice*. Often, half-hearted attempts are made to get back to what is assumed to be a purer state of religion from an earlier period of the church with the assumption that the further back you go the less time there was for such false teachings and practices to build up. This is related to the issue of Compromise and Reaffirmation (see page 10) except that it falls short of true reaffirmation. True reaffirmation occurs when we compare ourselves to the Bible, not how churches operated. The Ancient Future Church movement is a current example of this problem. The movement is used to give an air of authority for post-modern relativism in churches today. It reflects an attitude of not going back far enough because it only considers as far back as the early church, which is different that going back to the New Testament churches in the Bible. Their assumption is that the churches in the Patristic Age (age of the church fathers (c. 100-600 AD) were the ones that were the earliest *firmly* established churches and had the most to offer as pure churches. However, consider how Paul, Peter, and Jude described the severity of doctrinal compromise as early as 60 AD:

2Pet 2:1-3 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.

2And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

3And 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.

2Pet 3:15-17 And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

17Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

Phil 3:17-19 Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.

18(For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, *that they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ:

19Whose end *is* destruction, whose God *is* *their* belly, and *whose* glory *is* in their shame, who mind earthly things.)

Rom 16:17-18 Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them.

18For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.

Jude 1:4-16 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

...

8Likewise also these *filthy* dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

...

10But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

11Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

12These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

13Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

...

16These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

• Eschatology

The Elect (the Jews) – The Relationship between Judaism and the church

A repeating problem

§195 The relationship of the church with Judaism is very important and will come up again and again over the course of church history.

- **During the Protestant Reformation, there were debates about the role of the Mosaic law** in the life of a Christian. Some reformers, such as Martin Luther and John Calvin, emphasized the distinction between the moral, ceremonial, and civil aspects of the law. They rejected the idea that observing the ceremonial or civil aspects of the Mosaic law was necessary for salvation but maintained the moral law's ongoing relevance. However, antinomian movements emerged, rejecting the importance of the law altogether and promoting an extreme form of grace without regard for moral conduct.
- The Quartodeciman controversy revolved around the celebration of Easter and the timing of Passover. Some Christian communities, particularly in Asia Minor, adhered to the practice of **celebrating Easter on the same date as the Jewish Passover, following the Hebrew calendar. This practice was seen by some as a form of Judaizing**, and a debate arose regarding the proper date for Easter observance.
- Montanism (**2nd-3rd centuries**), while not exclusively a Judaizing movement, exhibited some Judaizing elements. **Montanists emphasized strict adherence to moral codes and the observance of fasts, paralleling Jewish practices.** They claimed to restore a higher standard of righteousness, often rejecting the authority of the established Church hierarchy.
- The Council of Elvira, held around 306 AD in Spain, addressed several disciplinary matters within the Church. One of the canons issued at the council was aimed at combating Judaizing tendencies by forbidding Christians from observing Jewish customs, such as attending Jewish festivals or observing the Sabbath.
- **In the 4th and 5th centuries, debates about circumcision and its significance arose.** Some groups, influenced by Judaizing tendencies, advocated for the continuation of circumcision as a requirement for Christian converts.
- **In certain regions of Europe, particularly among Frankish and Germanic converts to Christianity, there were instances of adopting Jewish rituals and practices.** This included observing elements of the Jewish Sabbath, dietary restrictions, **and even adopting Hebrew names.** Church authorities sought to discourage these practices and reaffirm the distinctiveness of Christian worship and customs.
- **The Council of Narbonne, held in 1050,** addressed the issue of Judaizing practices among Christians in the region of France. The council **issued decrees explicitly**

- prohibiting Christians from observing Jewish customs, including the Sabbath, dietary laws, and circumcision.** The council sought to reinforce the boundaries between Christianity and Judaism and discourage the blending of the two traditions.
- **During the Middle Ages, there was a rise in anti-Jewish sentiment and persecution, often rooted in religious prejudice. Accusations of Judaizing were sometimes used as a pretext for targeting Jewish communities.** Jewish customs and practices, including the observance of the Sabbath and dietary laws, were viewed with suspicion and were often used to fuel anti-Jewish sentiment.
 - **In Spain and Portugal during the Inquisition period, many Jews and their descendants converted to Christianity to avoid persecution.** However, some individuals, known as Conversos or New Christians, secretly maintained Jewish practices and traditions, practicing a form of Crypto-Judaism. This led to accusations of Judaizing and intensified the scrutiny and persecution by the Inquisition.

Preparation for communion with the Gentiles

§196 It's easy to understand how communion with the Gentiles was a problem in the first part of this age because the Mosaic Dispensation had been in place for over a thousand years. It had gone through numerous tests as God preserved it over and over again. As God worked with Israel over that period of time His redemptive plan was presented in multitudinous ways so that there would be no mistaking the Messiah when He came. Israel had been informed about the fact that there would be a relationship with the Gentiles.

- In Genesis 12:3, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising that through him, all the nations of the earth would be blessed. This covenant indicated a future role for the Jewish people in bringing blessings and salvation to all peoples, including the Gentiles.
- Throughout the Old Testament, there are prophecies about a coming Messiah who would bring salvation not only to Israel but also to the Gentiles. For example, in Isaiah 49:6, the servant of the Lord is described as a light to the *nations*, the word for Gentiles, bringing salvation to the ends of the earth.
- The Psalms and other wisdom literature contain passages that speak of the nations and their future inclusion in God's plan. Psalm 22:27-28, for instance, declares that all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the Lord, and all the families of the nations shall worship before Him.
- The prophets delivered oracles that emphasized the future inclusion of the Gentiles in God's redemptive plan. One notable example is Isaiah 60, which speaks of the nations coming to the light of God's glory and the wealth of the nations being brought to Jerusalem.
- The story of Jonah serves as a powerful narrative about God's concern for the nations. Jonah is sent to proclaim judgment on Nineveh, a Gentile city, but God shows mercy when the people repent. This story illustrates God's desire for all people to turn to Him and be saved.

The process of the inclusion of the Gentiles

§197 The very first issue regarding the Gentiles would be how they were to be admitted into the fellowship of the church. The church was clearly a "paradigm shift." The purpose of the Law and sacrifices had been misapplied. The temple was going to become defunct. The mission of God's people was going to be expanded and was no longer going to be primarily a testimony of God's grace to the world. Working out the Jewish Gentile relationship appears in Romans, Galatians, Ephesians, Acts, and the Revelation.

In spite of their awareness of the mission to the Gentile, the church of Acts 1-8 did not embrace that mission as defined by Christ in Acts 1 (see also p. 74).

Acts 1:8 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 Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.

Judging from what is *explicitly* stated in Acts 1:8 it could be suggested that they still didn't fully appreciate the relationship to the Gentiles at first. Though they were to reach out, we don't see them taking steps beyond Jerusalem until the persecution of Saul (Paul).

Acts 8:1-5 And Saul was consenting unto his death. And at that time there was a great persecution against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judaea and Samaria, except the apostles.

2And devout men carried Stephen *to his burial*, and made great lamentation over him.

3As for Saul, he made havock of the church, entering into every house, and haling men and women committed *them* to prison.

4Therefore they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word.

5Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them.

§198 When the Christians in Jerusalem started to spread, it did not include the apostles, the ones who were commissioned to build the church. The healing of Dorcas became the occasion to bring Peter to Joppa. Joppa was historically an international city and a prominent seaport with connections to various civilizations. Due to its strategic location on the Mediterranean coast, Joppa served as a crucial trading hub and a gateway for goods and travelers coming from different parts of the world. It also facilitated the exchange of ideas and cultures between the people of the Eastern Mediterranean, including ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Greeks, and Romans. The nature of the city would make it consistent with a place to link to the expansion of ministry to the Gentiles. There, Peter received a vision that would prepare him to go deeper into Gentile territory.

Acts 10:9-16 On the morrow, as they went on their journey, and drew nigh unto the city, Peter went up upon the housetop to pray about the sixth hour:

10And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance,

11And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth:

12Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air.

13And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat.

14But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean.

15And the voice *spake* unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, *that* call not thou common.

16This was done thrice: and the vessel was received up again into heaven.

Very quickly after this, messengers from the Roman centurion, Cornelius, arrived.

Acts 10:17-29 Now while Peter doubted in himself what this vision which he had seen should mean, behold, the men which were sent from Cornelius had made enquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate

...

22And they said, Cornelius the centurion, a just man, and one that feareth God, and of good report among all the nation of the Jews, was warned from God by an holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words of thee.

Peter was very aware of the significance of this Gentile/Jew interaction as he specifically referred to it.

Acts 10:34,43 Then Peter opened *his* mouth, and said, Of a truth I perceive that God is no respecter of persons:

...

43To him give all the prophets witness, that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins.

The Sign of Tongues

God's extraordinary act of giving them the gift of tongues was a critical sign to Peter and the other Jews concerning the relationship of the Gentiles in the church.

Acts 10:44-48 While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on all them which heard the word.

45And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost.

46For they heard them speak with tongues, and magnify God. Then answered Peter,

47Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we?

48And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then prayed

they him to tarry certain days.

§199 It should be noted here that they were not required to become Jewish proselytes first, following the demands of the Mosaic Law regarding Jewish proselytes. Circumcision, ritual immersion, acceptance of Jewish law, and study of Jewish beliefs and practices would have been foundational elements of conversion during that time, as they were central aspects of Jewish identity and religious practice.

Speaking in tongues was a specific sign of endorsement of the claims of the Gospel for the Jews. Why tongues were specifically significant to the Jews is taught in 1 Cor 14. To understand this passage, it is important to resolve a conflict in the chapter.

- Question 1: Is prophesying (preaching) intended for believers or unbelievers? The answer to this presents the first conflict which is found in vs. 22 and 24:

1Cor 14:21-25 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22Wherefore tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not: but **prophesying serveth not for them that believe not**, but for them which believe.

23If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and all speak with tongues, and there come in *those that are* unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?

24But **if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or one unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:**

25And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Vs. 22: Prophesying *is not* for unbelievers.

Vs. 24: Prophesying *is* for unbelievers

- Question 2: Are tongues intended for believers or unbelievers? This second conflict is in vs. 22 and 23:

1Cor 14:21-25 In the law it is written, With *men of* other tongues and other lips will I speak unto this people; and yet for all that will they not hear me, saith the Lord.

22Wherefore **tongues are for a sign, not to them that believe, but to them that believe not:** but prophesying *serveth* not for them that believe not, but for them which believe.

23If therefore the whole church be come together into one place, and **all speak with tongues, and there come in those that are unlearned, or unbelievers, will they not say that ye are mad?**

24But if all prophesy, and there come in one that believeth not, or *one* unlearned, he is convinced of all, he is judged of all:

25And thus are the secrets of his heart made manifest; and so falling down on *his* face he will worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth.

Vs. 22 Tongues *are* for unbelievers

Vs. 23 Tongues *are not* for unbelievers

This conflict is cleared up because we are able to distinguish between two separate groups the passage is dealing with. In vs. 21, when Paul speaks about *this people*, he is referring back to a prophecy in Isa 28:11,1,5 where the *this people* are identified as Jews (Ephraim is a reference to all of Israel through *synecdoche* where a part refers to the whole).

Isa 28:11,1,5 For with stammering lips and another tongue will he speak to this people.

1Woe to the crown of pride, to the drunkards of Ephraim, whose glorious beauty is a fading flower, which *are* on the head of the fat valleys of them that are overcome with wine!

5In that day shall the LORD of hosts be for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty, unto the residue of his people,

So, vs. 21-22 refer to the Jews.

In vs. 23 a different group is the focus. The whole church that Paul was addressing was at Corinth and mixed with Gentiles. Vs. 23-25 refer to the Gentiles.

The conclusion would then be,

- Prophesying (vs. 24) is for **Gentile** unbelievers, but tongues is not (vs. 23)
- Tongues (vs. 22) is for **Jewish** unbelievers, but prophesying is not (vs. 22)

When supposed tongues are used today as a sign to the Gentiles, it is inconsistent with this Biblical principle. When the church at Jerusalem spoke in tongues at Pentecost, it was to a Jewish audience gathered from around the world. Tongues was a sign to confirm to them the Gospel claims that Peter and the others were making.

This is all in accordance to how Paul described the Jews in 1 Cor.

1Cor 1:22 For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

This is why it was important for the Jews accompanying Peter in Joppa to be able to report the tongues to the church in Jerusalem. As the Gospel was going to really begin to spread to the Gentiles, the sign of tongues confirmed their inclusion without having to go through any Jewish proselytization.

On the third, and last, occasion of tongues, the large and significant Jewish community at Ephesus witnessed that sign as they were to receive the ministry of Paul further including the Gentiles in the church. In fact, he would write to the church later in Eph.

Eph 2:11-19 Wherefore remember, that ye *being* in time past Gentiles in the flesh, who are called Uncircumcision by that which is called the Circumcision in the flesh made by hands;

12That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and

without God in the world:

13But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

14For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

15Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, *so* making peace;

16And that he might reconcile both unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

17And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, and to them that were nigh.

18For through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

19Now therefore ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellowcitizens with the saints, and of the household of God;

Eph 3:2-6 If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God which is given me to you-ward:

3How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery; (as I wrote afore in few words,

...

6That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, and of the same body, and partakers of his promise in Christ by the gospel:

The inclusion of the Gentiles and their relation to the Jews is one of the major themes in the book of Romans. The Mosaic Law does not serve to save, but then the question of what role does the people of the Law serve. In Rom 9-12, Paul explains that though the Jews, as a nation though not as individuals, will be set aside, they will be restored in the future. That is why Israel, and not the church, is so prominent in the Tribulation after Rev 3 and the Rapture of the saints.

§200 The result of the Council of Jerusalem was to make a recommendation for the Gentiles of Antioch to be respectful of the presence of Jews in their midst. This is reflected in their refusal to give no command and then to suggest that it is a *good idea* that "if" they do those things, they would "do well."

Acts 15:28-30 For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things;

29That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

30So when they were dismissed, they came to Antioch: and when they had gathered the multitude together, they delivered the epistle:

The Millennium

Eusebius (260-339) wrote in *Ecclesiastical History* (Book 3, ch. 39, 324 AD) of Papias (60-130 AD) and the effect of his Millennial views:

7. And Papias, of whom we are now speaking, confesses that he received the words of the apostles from those that followed them, but says that he was himself a hearer of Aristion and the presbyter John. At least he mentions them frequently by name, and gives their traditions in his writings. These things, we hope, have not been uselessly adduced by us.

8. But it is fitting to subjoin to the words of Papias which have been quoted, other passages from his works in which he relates some other wonderful events which he claims to have received from tradition.

...

11. The same writer gives also other accounts which he says came to him through unwritten tradition, certain strange parables and teachings of the Saviour, and some other more mythical things.

12. To these belong **his statement that there will be a period of some thousand years after the resurrection of the dead, and that the kingdom of Christ will be set up in material form on this very earth. I suppose he got these ideas through a misunderstanding of the apostolic accounts, not perceiving that the things said by them were spoken mystically in figures.**

13. For he appears to have been of very limited understanding, as one can see from his discourses. But **it was due to him that so many of the Church Fathers after him adopted a like opinion**, urging in their own support the antiquity of the man; as for instance Irenaeus and any one else that may have proclaimed similar views.

This testimony indicates that Millennialism was the standard eschatological view. So, by the 4th century, Eusebius spoke of the allegorical view of the Revelation as speaking mystically in figures. He also spoke against first century Cerinthus' Millennialism, whose heretical views added on to Eusebius' criticism.

But Cerinthus also, by means of revelations which he pretends were written by a great apostle, brings before us marvelous things which he falsely claims were shown him by angels; and he says that after the resurrection the kingdom of Christ will be set up on earth, and that the flesh dwelling in Jerusalem will again be subject to desires and pleasures. And being an enemy of the Scriptures of God, he asserts, with the purpose of deceiving men, that there is to be a period of a thousand years for marriage festivals. (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book 3, ch. 28)

Also, *The Didache* (p. 78) emphasized the return of the Lord.

Be watchful for your life; let your lamps not be quenched and your loins not ungirdled, but be ye ready; for ye know not the hour the hour in which our Lord cometh.

And ye shall gather yourselves together frequently, seeking what is fitting for your souls; for the whole time of your faith shall not profit you, if ye be not perfected at the last season.

For in the last days the false prophets and corrupters shall be multiplied, and the sheep shall be turned into wolves, and love shall be turned into hate.

For as lawlessness increaseth, they shall hate one another and shall persecute and betray. And then the world-deceiver shall appear as a son of God; and shall work signs and wonders, and the earth shall be delivered into his hands; and he shall do unholy things, which have never been since the world began.

Then all created mankind shall come to the fire of testing, and many shall be offended and perish; but they that endure in their faith shall be saved by the Curse Himself.

And then shall the signs of the truth appear; first a sign of a rift in the heaven, then a sign of a voice of a trumpet, and thirdly a resurrection of the dead;

yet not of all, but as it was said The Lord shall come and all His saints with Him.

Then shall the world see the Lord coming upon the clouds of heaven.

Futurist vs. Preterist

In this age, the understanding of the events of the Revelation are reserved for the future, which is the Futurist view of the Revelation. The alternate view that the events of the Revelation have been fulfilled in Nero, for example, will not become popular until the Reformation and after. Covenant theology (p. 208) which blends the Old Testament and the New Testament sometimes facilitates Preterism so it can be found primarily in churches that favor Reformed theology.





IV . SMYRNA 100-300

THE SUFFERING CHURCH

Rev 2:8-11 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead, and is alive;

9I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

10Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer: behold, the devil shall cast *some* of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

11He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

Jesus commended the church for its spiritual richness in spite of its worldly poverty and persecution. It would experience persecution which led the church in one of its first struggles to resist the centralizing pressure to conform whether it was to paganism or to a united and universal church.

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Smyrna

§201 After the completion of the Scriptures with the book of the Revelation and the death of John, the church moved on to its next challenge. After going through its days of persecution, the *next* age will be marked by the proclamation of religious tolerance in Emperor Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 AD and the first ecumenical, or universal, council, the First Council of Nicaea, in 325 AD.

§202 The Smyrna Church age coincides roughly with what is known as the *Ante-Nicene* (before Nicaea) *Patristic Age*, or the age of the *Ante-Nicene Church Fathers*. The next age, the Pergamos Church age will include the Nicene and *Post-Nicene Church Fathers* (see the Church Ages chart on page 21 for comparison of the ages).

§203 According to Church historians, the *entire* Patristic Age ended with the critical change at the Fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD which initiated the Medieval Church Age. However, if you do further reading, the Patristic Age is sometimes recognized as ending in the west by 600 AD, the east by 750 AD, but certainly by the time of Charlemagne in 800 AD.

§204 For our study, *we* divide the *Patristic Age* into *two* parts corresponding to the Revelation churches of Sardis (roughly 100 to 300 AD) and Pergamos (roughly 300 to 450 AD).

The Big Idea:

From the death of John to Constantine, this age covers half of what church historians call the Patristic Age.

2. Character of the Age

• Purity from pressures from without and within

§205 The letter to the Church in Smyrna is the shortest of all the letters to the seven churches. Perhaps the reason for this is that this is the one church which receives no rebuke, only encouragement to endure through intense persecution. Smyrna could rightly be called "the persecuted church" or "the martyr church."

Smyrna was the opposite of Laodicea. Smyrna suffered, but was rich, Laodicea was fat and comfortable, but in poverty. Being the Martyr church is probably the reason for its spiritual richness.

The reason they are counted so blessed and without judgment is commonly understood because of the effect of going through suffering for the sake of Christ. This church will be marked by ten days of tribulation, which has been regarded as ten Roman persecutions in this time period.

§206 Persecution and suffering have always had the effect of purifying the church and believers because they call us to examine to what degree we are committed to our faith. It is possible to be greatly committed while things are going good, but due to how hard it is to keep that level of commitment when we are tried reveals those who are weak. The weak will either drop off or do the opposite, toughen up.

§207 Although we might not have great persecution all the time, offering baptism only to qualified candidates has served to call for self-examination before being committed to the membership of Baptist churches. This is in contrast to the Pedobaptists (infant baptizers) who presume that faith will follow in the future which was one of the issues that arose because of the persecution.

As persecution has been a great purifier of Christianity, that pressure will cause two divergent movements to coalesce: a united church and separatist churches.

§208 This church age will have its detractors and adversaries to contend with as indicated by the *Synagogue of Satan*. The church will not only face pressure from persecution, but also the pressure that comes from the intellectual influence of the worldly philosophy of the day and the heretical movements that evolved from that.

The Big Idea:
Being the martyr church is possibly why it was spiritually rich.

• Ten persecutions

Christianity was a *religio illicita*. It was the policy of the Roman Empire to tolerate the religions of conquered peoples, so long as they would not attempt to proselyte. Judaism was a *religio licita*. Christianity, so far as it was distinguished from Judaism, was reckoned among secret societies or *collegia* which were contrary to law. Cicero [106-43 BC] says: "Separately let no one have gods, nor may they worship privately new or foreign gods unless they have been publicly recognized." Gaius [110-180 AD], speaking of forbidden associations, says: "Neither a society nor college, nor body of this kind, is conceded to all promiscuously; for this thing is coerced (regulated) by

laws or codes of the Senate and imperial (or princely) constitutions." The essentially proselyting spirit of Christianity was an additional cause of its unlawfulness.

2. Christianity was a religion which aspired to universality. Christ's kingdom was to be set up throughout the whole earth. With the Romans the State was the chief thing. Religion was to be promoted only in so far as it served the interests of the State. The Christians had no sympathy with this idea, and their enemies lost no opportunity to represent Christianity as dangerous to the State. This brought upon them the enmity of rulers.

3. Christianity was a religion hated by the influential classes. The withdrawal of Christians from social intercourse with the pagans, rendered necessary by the idolatrous practices connected with every department of life, caused the Christians to be looked upon as enemies of the human race. Their refusal to participate in idolatrous rites and to frequent the temples, and the exclusion from their homes and, of necessity, their persons of all symbols of idolatry, led them to be looked upon as atheists – enemies of the gods.

(See Newman for more explanation, 98-99)

David Cloud (Cloud 32,33) lists the 10 persecutions:

- **Domitian** (95). The persecution under Domitian was short, but extremely violent. Many thousands of Christians were killed in Rome and Italy.
- **Trajan** (98-117). Christians were not sought out, but when they were accused by someone, they were punished. Christianity was regarded as an illegal religion, because Christians refused to take part in emperor worship, and the churches were regarded as secret societies, which was forbidden. Though not as aggressive as previous persecutions, many Christians died for their faith in cruel ways. Many suffered death, and numbers, even females, were tortured in an attempt to force them to incriminate others.
- **Adrian** (117-138). His persecution against Christians was "in moderation," but many died.
- **Antonius Pius** (139-161). Though it is said that Antonius favored Christians, he allowed the laws against them to be enforced and many died. Polycarp of Smyrna, who was supposedly a disciple of John the apostle, was put to death around 160. For refusing to burn incense to the emperor, he was burned at the stake. Before he died, he said, "Eighty and six years I have served Him, and He has done me no wrong. How then can I blaspheme my King and Savior? You threaten me with a fire that burns for a season, and after a little while is quenched, but you are ignorant of the fire of everlasting punishment that is prepared for the wicked."
- **Marcus Aurelius** (161-179). This emperor was very cruel and instigated severe persecutions. Thousands were tormented and brutally killed, being thrown to wild beasts and beheaded. For refusing to sacrifice to the pagan idols, Justin Martyr was beaten and beheaded in 165. Some of his students died with him. Many have acclaimed Aurelius's stoic *Meditations*, but stoic philosophy didn't lead him to righteousness and truth.

- **Septimius Severus** (193-211). Especially in Egypt and northern Africa many Christians suffered. In Alexandria, Egypt, martyrs were burned, crucified, and beheaded daily. In 203, Perpetua and Felicity were put to death. Perpetua was a married noblewoman, and Felicity was a slave who was imprisoned and martyred with her. Perpetua had trusted Christ and received baptism in spite of her father's strong opposition. She was soon imprisoned and had a child during her confinement. Perpetua and Felicity and others were executed at the military games in Carthage in celebration of the emperor's birthday. They were beaten and then killed by wild beasts.
- **Maximinus** (235-238). Many prominent Christian leaders were put to death.
- **Decius** (249-251). The persecutions of Decius extended to all parts of the empire and were very severe. He wanted to exterminate Christianity. "In 249, Decius, coming to the throne, required all without exception to embrace the pagan worship on pain of death. Professors were not in a state to meet sufferings, and apostasy to an alarming extent ensued, as measures of the severest kinds were adopted to bring all to acknowledge pagan rites. Many realized cruel martyrdoms. Varied circumstances attended the churches through the remainder of the century. At the close of this age we may discover the expiring order of gospel worship, and the extinction of that simplicity which characterized apostolic institutions"
- **Valerian** (253-260). The persecutions under this emperor were even more severe than under Decius.
- **Diocletian** (284-305). "The pagan priests wrought so effectually on the fears of Diocletian, as to obtain from him, in 303, an edict to pull down the sanctuaries of Christians, to burn their books and writings, and to take from them all their civil rights and privileges, to render them incapable of any honors or civil promotion. Other orders were issued of a more sanguinary character; the magistrates employed all *History of the Churches from a Baptist Perspective* 34 kinds of tortures, and the most unsupportable punishments were invented, to force Christians to apostatize—and the ministers of religion were in particular the objects of the emperor's aversion"...For ten years during the reign of Diocletian, Christians were hunted in cave and forest; they were burned, thrown to wild beasts, put to death by every torture cruelty could devise. It was a resolute, determined, systematic effort to abolish the Christian name...During the persecutions that occurred under Diocletian "the sacred Scriptures were sought with more care and destroyed with more fury than any preceding persecution"

§209 We should be careful to note that the persecution of the church was not constant or necessarily universal. Also, not all believers resisted the persecution, while there were also those who *invited* it for the glory of martyrdom Those who invited it had to understand that it was prideful to seek martyrdom as some kind of badge to brag about.

§210 During this time frame, there was a constant effort to get Christianity to either yield to paganism or to be blended with paganism.

The Apologists

§211 Because of the persecutions, Christian leaders had reason to offer explanations of Christianity as a defense. Overall, the early Christian apologists had diverse audiences in mind and sought to engage with a wide range of people, including Roman authorities, philosophers, pagans, Jews, heretics, seekers, and fellow believers.

- Some apologists, such as Athenagoras of Athens and Justin Martyr, directed their works to Roman emperors and high-ranking officials. They sought to dispel misconceptions about Christianity and request fair treatment for Christians, arguing that Christianity was a peaceful and rational faith, loyal to the Roman Empire.
- Several apologists, including Justin Martyr, Tatian, and Clement of Alexandria, engaged in philosophical dialogue with educated pagans. They sought to demonstrate the rationality and superiority of Christian beliefs, showing that Christianity was compatible with reason and philosophy.
- Many apologists, like Minucius Felix and Arnobius, wrote their works to address the broader pagan population. They aimed to refute pagan accusations against Christians, correct misunderstandings about Christian practices, and invite pagans to consider the truth of the Christian faith.
- Some apologists, like Justin Martyr, addressed Jewish audiences. They sought to demonstrate the continuity between Judaism and Christianity, arguing that Jesus was the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies and the true Messiah.
- Irenaeus of Lyons and Tertullian wrote works specifically to counter the teachings of heretical or Gnostic groups. They aimed to defend orthodox Christian doctrine, refute heretical beliefs, and establish the authority of apostolic tradition.
- The apologists also wrote with the intention of reaching out to those who were curious about Christianity or contemplating conversion. They presented Christianity as an attractive and intellectually satisfying alternative to other religious and philosophical systems.
- Some apologists, like Clement of Alexandria and Origen, wrote for the benefit of their fellow Christians. They aimed to provide theological education, answer questions, and offer guidance in understanding and defending the Christian faith.

§212 Apologists included:

- Justin Martyr (c. 100-165 AD): Known as Justin Martyr, he was an early Christian philosopher and apologist who wrote several works defending Christianity against pagan and philosophical criticisms. Some of his notable works include the "First Apology," "Second Apology," and "Dialogue with Trypho."
- Athenagoras of Athens (c. 133-190 AD): A Christian philosopher and apologist who wrote the "Plea for the Christians" (Legatio pro Christianis), addressed to Roman emperors to defend Christianity against false accusations.
- Theophilus of Antioch (c. 2nd century AD): He was the sixth bishop of Antioch and wrote "To Autolycus" (Ad Autolycum), a defense of Christianity against pagan objections.
- Tatian the Assyrian (c. 120-180 AD): A Syrian Christian apologist and student of

Justin Martyr. He wrote "Address to the Greeks" (Oratio ad Graecos), criticizing Greek mythology and advocating for Christianity.

- Minucius Felix (c. 2nd to 3rd century AD): A Roman lawyer and Christian apologist who authored "Octavius," a dialogue defending Christianity against pagan critics.
- Tertullian (c. 155-240 AD): A North African theologian and apologist who wrote several works defending Christianity, such as the "Apology" (Apologeticus) and "On the Testimony of the Soul" (De Testimonio Animae).
- Origen (c. 184-253 AD): An Alexandrian scholar and theologian, Origen wrote "Against Celsus" (Contra Celsum), a comprehensive defense of Christianity against the criticisms of the pagan philosopher Celsus.
- Arnobius of Sicca (c. 3rd to 4th century AD): Arnobius was a Christian teacher and apologist who wrote "Against the Pagans" (Adversus Gentes) and "Against the Heathen" (Adversus Nationes), defending Christianity against pagan beliefs.

• The Cults

Nothing new under the sun - an introduction to the cults

§213 While the cause of defending the faith wrought an emphasis on purity within the church for which Jesus praised it, that did not preclude the work of Satan. This was indicated by the fact that the *Synagogue of Satan* was a threat. Satan's cause was clearly at work in this age as cult activity was at work. Of special note is the fact that there is truly nothing new under the sun.

Ecc1 1:9-10 The thing that hath been, it *is that* which shall be; and that which is done *is that* which shall be done: and *there is* no new *thing* under the sun.
10Is there *any* thing whereof it may be said, See, this *is* new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.

§214 The modern cults do not trace directly back *by succession* to the false movements of the early church. They do trace back to them *ideologically*. What is amazing is how the modern groups mirror the false systems of that day.

§215 What is also interesting, is that it did not take long for these groups to emerge. The early church writers were very evidently dependent not only on the Old Testament Scriptures, but also on the New Testament writings as they became available and clearly reliable above all other non-canonical works.

§216 As the church fathers made the mistake of trying to respond philosophically as they expanded their writings (See *The Allegorical Method*, p. 28). Another influence was the emphasis on emotional mysticism (See *Intellect vs. Emotion*, p. 11).

Gnosticism 135-300 AD

§217 Early Gnosticism was introduced earlier (see p. 51) but came into full fruition in the Smyrna church age taking root around 136 AD. It was consistent

The Big Idea:
Gnosticism: matter is evil, spirit is good. Salvation comes from knowledge.

with the method of philosophical syncretism that began to influence Christian thinkers (p. 28). **The chief connection between many of the philosophical views was the Alexandrian School** (p. 28).

§218 It's important to note that Gnosticism was not a monolithic movement but rather a collection of diverse ideas and sects that shared certain philosophical and religious themes. The end of the Smyrna Age of the Church and the beginning of the Pergamos Age with the legal establishment of religious tolerance of Christianity marked the turning point when Gnosticism was no longer a major factor in church history. However, it's important to note that Gnostic ideas never completely disappeared but underwent transformations and influenced various esoteric and mystical movements throughout history. This is seen today in the New Age movement (c. 1960) and various aspects of Mormonism (est. 1830) and Theosophy (est. 1875).

Plato's idealism (or realism)

§219 Gnosticism was consistent with Platonic philosophy. At the heart of Platonic idealism is the belief that the physical world we perceive through our senses is a mere reflection or imperfect copy of a higher, non-material realm of perfect and eternal forms or "Ideas." These Ideas, according to Plato, exist independently of the physical world and are the true reality. The physical objects we encounter in the world are only imperfect manifestations or representations of these perfect Ideas.

§220 Plato held that true knowledge could only be attained through reason and intellectual contemplation of the Ideas. Knowledge gained through the *senses* was regarded as unreliable and deceptive since it only provided access to the imperfect physical world.

§221 According to Plato, human souls have a pre-existing knowledge of the Ideas, which they acquired before birth and then forgot upon entering the physical world. True knowledge is thus a process of recollection or reminiscence, where the soul recovers what it once knew in the realm of Ideas.

Similarities between Platonism and Gnosticism:

- **Dualistic Cosmology:** Both Platonism and Gnosticism share a dualistic worldview. In Platonism, there is a distinction between the material world (the realm of appearances) and the world of Forms (the realm of true reality). In Gnosticism, there is a dualism between the spiritual realm of light and the material realm of darkness.
- **Role of Knowledge:** Both Platonism and Gnosticism place great emphasis on the importance of knowledge (gnosis) for attaining higher truth and understanding the nature of reality. In Platonism, knowledge of the Forms leads to a higher understanding of reality. In Gnosticism, gnosis is the key to salvation and liberation from the material world.
- **Transcendent and Immaterial:** Both systems posit the existence of a transcendent and immaterial reality beyond the physical world. In Platonism, the Forms exist independently of the material world. In Gnosticism, there is a divine realm of light that is distinct from the material world.

Stoicism

While Stoicism and Gnosticism were similar in their philosophical elements, Stoicism was a *purely* philosophical system that recognized divinity as an *abstract principle*, while the other had a more *personal* conception of the divine. The philosophical elements of Stoicism that were particularly consistent with Gnosticism and appear later in Augustine include:

- **Divine Rationality:** Stoics believed that the universe is guided by a divine rationality (logos) that determines the course of events. This rational principle ensures order, purpose, and harmony in the world. Human beings are part of this cosmic order.
- **Freedom Within Determinism:** Stoics believed in the concept of "compatibilism," which suggests that determinism (the idea that everything is determined by prior causes) and human free will are not incompatible. While external events may be determined by the logos, Stoics believed that individuals still possess the ability to make rational choices and decisions *in accordance with* nature and reason.
- **Acceptance of Fate:** Stoicism encouraged individuals to accept the natural order of the universe, including their own fate. This acceptance was not passive resignation but an active embrace of one's circumstances and a willingness to work with them. Stoics believed that by aligning their will with the universal reason and accepting what cannot be changed, individuals could find inner tranquility and peace.
- **Virtue and Inner Freedom:** Stoics considered the pursuit of virtue (excellence of character) to be the highest good. They believed that true freedom was not the ability to control external events but the inner freedom to choose one's response to those events with wisdom, courage, and self-discipline.
- **Deterministic View of Events:** Some Stoics leaned more towards a deterministic view, suggesting that everything happens in accordance with the divine will and that events are predetermined by the logos. This could be interpreted as a form of fatalism, where events are seen as inevitable and beyond human control.

Prominent Gnostic thinkers of the 2nd century

It is interesting to note that these Gnostic thinkers form a cluster at about this time. They did not work together, but they all emerge from a similar philosophical mindset and method.

- **Basilides (circa 117-138 AD):** Basilides was a Gnostic teacher known for founding the Basilidian school of thought. **He taught in Alexandria and his teachings combined elements of Platonism, Pythagoreanism, and Gnosticism.** Basilides believed in a hierarchy of divine beings known as "aeons" and emphasized the importance of knowledge (gnosis) for salvation.
- **Valentinus (circa 100-160 AD):** Valentinus was a prominent Gnostic teacher who founded the Valentinian school of thought. He taught in Rome and his teachings were highly influential. **Valentinus developed a complex cosmology involving a series of aeons and the concept of the Pleroma, a divine realm. His system was marked by its emphasis on the role of Sophia (wisdom) and the redemption of fallen aeons.**

- Marcion (circa 85-160 AD): While not a traditional Gnostic in the same sense as others, Marcion was an influential figure who developed a dualistic worldview. He rejected the Old Testament and emphasized the dichotomy between the harsh, wrathful God of the Old Testament and the loving God of the New Testament. Marcion's teachings had a significant impact on early Christian theology. **His challenge that the Old Testament was not reliable because it was created by a lesser God promoted the need to defend and establish recognition of the Biblical canon. This was especially true since there were clearly non-canonical books being written that claimed apostolic authorship.**
- Carpocrates (circa 2nd century CE): Carpocrates was a **Gnostic teacher associated with Alexandria**. He taught that the soul's salvation was achieved through reincarnation and the overcoming of the limitations of the material world. Carpocrates' followers believed in the liberation of the soul from the cycle of rebirth.

Scriptures that stand out in stark contrast to Gnostic teachings include:

Matter itself is not evil:

- Gen 1:31: Creation declared very good by God.
- John 1:14: The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.
- Rom 8:19-21: Creation awaits liberation from decay.
- 1 Cor 15:42-44: Resurrection of the body.

God's Glory in Creation:

- Ps 19:1-2: Heavens declare God's glory.
- Ps 104:24-30: God's wisdom in creation.
- Ps 8:3-5: Reflection on God's creation of humanity.
- Ps 139:13-14: We are fearfully and wonderfully made.
- Ps 148:1-5: All creation praises the Lord.

Humanity as Crown of Creation:

- Gen 1:26-28: Humans made in God's image, dominion given.
- Ps 8:4-8: Humans crowned with glory, rulers over creation.
- Eph 2:10: Believers God's handiwork, created for good works.
- Col 1:16-17: All things created by and for Christ.
- Gen 2:7: God forms man from dust, breathes life.

Montanism 135-160 AD

Montanus was from Phrygia, which is located in western Asia Minor. His ministry was active from somewhere near 150-180 AD but the effect of Montanism

The Big Idea:
The first Charismatics.

gradually faded going into the 3rd century. He began to fall into states of ecstasy and to have visions, and believed he was a divinely inspired prophet who claimed that the Paraclete, or the Comforter, spoke through him. He believed that this was the dispensation of the Paraclete that began with *him*. Two noble ladies (Priscilla and Maximilla) attached themselves to Montanus, and had visions and prophesied in the same way. These constituted the three original prophets of the sect, and all that they taught was claimed to be of binding authority on all.

§222 They were considered to be orthodox in their time. They did not pretend to alter in any way the revelation given by Christ and his apostles. But they claimed that some things had not been revealed by the apostles because at that early stage the Church was not able to bear them. They claimed that additional revelations were now given because the fullness of time had come which was to precede the second coming of Christ. These revelations did not deal with theology, but wholly with matters of life and discipline. They taught a rigid asceticism against the growing worldliness of the church and a severe discipline against its laxer methods.

§223 They believed in the universal priesthood of believers with the right for males *or* females to perform all the functions of church officers, against the growing sacerdotalism (priestly functions) of the church.

§224 They aimed at a puritanic reaction against worldliness, and of a democratic reaction against growing aristocracy in the Church. They insisted that ministers were made by God alone, by the direct endowment of his Spirit in distinction from human ordination. They looked upon their prophets who were supernaturally called and endowed by the Spirit as supreme in the church.

§225 They held that their rigid asceticism was commanded by the revelation of the Spirit through their prophets, and was promoted by their belief in the speedy coming of Christ to set up his kingdom on earth, which was likewise prophesied. They were pre-Millenarians or Chiliasts.

§226 Although it failed and passed away, Montanism had a marked influence on the development of the Church. In the first place, it aroused a general distrust of prophecy, and the result was that the Church soon came to the conviction that prophecy had entirely ceased. This was a positive effect.

§227 In the second place, the Church was led to see the necessity of emphasizing the historical Christ and historical Christianity over against the Montanistic claims of a constantly developing revelation, and thus to put great emphasis upon the Scripture canon. This, also, was positive.

§228 In the third place, the Church had to lay increased stress upon the organization—upon its appointed and ordained officers—over against the claims of irregular prophets who might at any time arise as organs of the Spirit. The development of Christianity into a religion of the Book and of the organization was thus greatly advanced, and the line began to be sharply drawn between the age of the apostles, in which there had been direct supernatural revelations, and the later age, in which such revelations had disappeared. This was mixed. Being a religion of the Book was good. Elevating church organization would lead to a centralizing effect in the church, which was not good.

§229 In the fourth place, the Chiliastic ideas of Montanism produced a reaction in the Church which caused the final rejection of all grossly physical Premillenarian beliefs which up to this time had been very common. This was not good.

(Adapted from Schaff, NPNF2-1, 542-543)

§230 This is certainly reflective of the emotional/mystical influence on the church. Our modern charismatic movement is not new. We must keep in mind that the antiquity of a belief or practice does not make that belief more authoritative.

Manichaeism 240-274 AD

§231 Mani (216-274 AD), the founder of Manichaeism, began his ministry and teachings around the year 240 AD. He was born in the area of modern-day Iraq. Around the age of 25, Mani claimed to have received a revelation from a divine figure,

which he referred to as the "Twin" or the "Paraclete." This revelation was said to have commissioned him to spread a new message that would unify the teachings of various religious traditions, including Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Buddhism.

§232 Mani's teachings emphasized the cosmic struggle between the forces of light and darkness, the redemption of trapped divine sparks, and the pursuit of spiritual enlightenment. At the heart of Manichaeism was the cosmic struggle between two opposing realms: the realm of light and the realm of darkness. Light represented the divine, spiritual, and pure, while darkness symbolized materiality, ignorance, and evil. Human souls were believed to be sparks of light entrapped in the material world, engaged in a ceaseless battle against the forces of darkness. Manichaeism presented a grand narrative of cosmic drama, wherein the release of divine sparks from material bondage was the ultimate goal. The conflict between light and darkness played out across various realms, each with its own divine beings.

§233 The cosmic drama was not only a struggle between good and evil but also a narrative of redemption and liberation. Manichaeism viewed human souls as part of this larger cosmic drama. Salvation was achieved by freeing the divine spark from the material world through ascetic practices, ethical living, and the reception of secret knowledge (*gnosis*). Manichaeans aspired to cleanse their souls from the impurities of the material realm and return to the domain of light.

Manichaeism evolved from Gnosticism as its greatest child. **Manichaeism was also dualistic—the physical body was evil and the spirit was good. To birth a child was sin. Persons were unilaterally pre-determined before birth by the good god (who did not create physical matter) to be either elect or damned independently of human choice...In Manichaeism, the 'enslaved will' cannot choose—it is damned until unilaterally released by "reconciliation to God through Christ." In Manichaeism, Primeval Man (the first human) used free will to abandon his position in the realm of light and went down into matter and darkness. Escape then became impossible.** The Manichaean doctrine of cosmic origins relies enormously on sexual lust among the gods/archons (rulers), called "the seduction of the archons." Mani invented Manichaeism to be a syncretistic (a combined) religion for all persons worldwide by combining Judaism and Buddhism, then adding

The Big Idea:
The perfection of Gnosticism and
the precursor to Calvinism.

Christianity...**He held the theory that sexual passion during human intercourse transmits sin itself to the children. Mani also borrowed the concept of humanity's total inability to respond to God from the ancient Indo-Mesopotamian *Maitrāyana Upanishad IV*. This work describes humans as robbed of freedom, imprisoned, drugged by delusion, and in deepest darkness. "He awakens Adam from the sleep of death, shakes him, opens his eyes, raises him up, exorcises demons to free him of demon possession, shows him all of imprisoned [physical] matter and suffering light soul." The Redeemer commands (an awakening from drunken slumber) and then gives what he commanded by granting grace (in order to gaze upon deity): "The Redeemer, the just Zoroaster, spake thus with his soul: 'Deep is the drunkenness in which thou slumberest, awake and gaze upon me! Grace upon thee from the world of peace whence for thy sake I am sent.'"**...**Like both Neoplatonism and Gnosticism, Manichaeism requires the divine being to unilaterally awaken a "dead soul" who only then can respond to the divine being..Manichaeism also taught free will was totally lost after humanity's fall.** Because of this total depravity, Manichaean salvation emphasizes Christ's grace that dominates many prayers and hymns. For example, one Manichaean prayer requests Jesus to "Come with Grace" eleven times...One scholar aptly summarized the response of the philosopher Alexander of Lycopolis to Manichaean 'grace:' "Alexander is shocked by Manichaean limitation of the path to salvation to the elect. For him, this directly contradicts the idea of a Providence, by definition equally caring for all." (Wilson, 23,24)

§234 Of special note is Augustine (354-430 AD) who first embraced Manichaeism when he went to Carthage in 370. He turned against Manichaeism when he was converted in 386 AD. He wrote against the Manichaeans in 386 and 397 AD. However, when Augustine went to debate the Pelagius from 412-418 AD, he resorted to Manichaean concepts on human nature which were especially used to justify infant baptism (p. 124). These views also influenced the later teachings of Augustine that became popular in the Reformation.

Arianism late 200s, early 300s

Even though Arianism arose in the late 3rd century, we will leave the discussion of this for the next church age because it is so very connected to the First Council of Nicaea which was part of the beginning of the next age.

• Dissenters

Novatian and Cyprian, purity of the church 250 AD

Novatianism

§235 Novatianism, named after its founder Novatian, was an early Christian theological movement that emerged in the mid-3rd century AD. The movement was primarily

The Big Idea:
Novation's resistance of a universal church.

concerned with issues of Church discipline and the treatment of those who had lapsed in their faith during times of persecution.

§236 The most notable persecution was the Decian persecution (249-251 AD) under the emperor Decius. During times of persecution, some Christians, known as "lapsi" (the fallen), renounced their faith to escape persecution or death. After the persecutions ended, the question arose within the Christian community about how to deal with the "lapsi." Should they be readmitted to the church, or should they be permanently excluded due to their apostasy? This issue became a matter of intense debate among Christians.

§237 Novatian, a Roman presbyter, emerged as the prominent advocate for a strict stance on church discipline. He argued that those who had lapsed and committed grave sins during the persecution should not be readmitted to the Church. Novatian believed that the church should uphold a high standard of purity, and forgiveness should be withheld from those who had sinned so gravely. Novatian's strict views on Church discipline caused a division within the Christian community. He and his followers established their separate church, challenging the authority of the Roman Church led by the bishop Cornelius. Novatian and his followers formed a schismatic movement known as Novatianism. The Novatianists, also called "Cathari" (meaning "the pure ones"), believed in a purer, more exclusive church and claimed to be the true representatives of apostolic purity and holiness.

§238 After the death of Fabian in 250 AD, the Roman clergy and the Christian community in Rome had gathered to elect a new bishop, Cornelius. Novatian, another Roman presbyter, was a rigorist and held strict views on Church discipline. He was a learned and respected theologian and had a significant influence among the Roman clergy and Christian community. He believed that Christians who had lapsed during persecution should not be readmitted to the Church under any circumstances. Novatian refused to accept Cornelius's election as bishop, arguing that his leniency toward the lapsed Christians disqualified him from the office. Despite Cornelius's election and recognition by the majority of the Roman clergy and laity, Novatian decided to establish his own separate church and gathered followers who supported his strict stance on Church discipline.

§239 Cornelius convened a synod (council) of Western bishops in Rome in 251 AD, which declared him as the legitimate Bishop of Rome and condemned Novatian and his followers as schismatics. The council reaffirmed the Church's traditional practice of granting forgiveness to repentant Christians and emphasized the importance of unity within the Christian community. Cornelius received support from other prominent Christian leaders of the time, including Cyprian of Carthage, Dionysius of Alexandria, and the Eastern bishops. They recognized him as the rightful bishop and defended his position against Novatian's challenge.

§240 Despite initial popularity, Novatianism faced opposition from the churches and other influential Christian thinkers. Years later, the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD played a significant role in condemning Novatianism as a heresy. The council upheld the position on readmitting penitent lapsed Christians and rejected Novatian's divisive views.

Cyprian and unity

§241 Cyprian, as the Bishop of Carthage, was a staunch defender of the unity and catholicity (universal nature) of the church. He strongly opposed the Novatianist movement and sought to counter its teachings and practices. Cyprian wrote several letters and treatises addressing the issues raised by the Novatianists and defending the Catholic Church's position on forgiveness and reconciliation.

The Big Idea:
Cyprian emphasized the authority of a universal church and the bishops.

§242 One of the letters that Cyprian wrote specifically addressing Novatian is known as "Epistle 52." In this letter, written around 251 AD, Cyprian rebuked Novatian and his followers for causing a schism within the Church. He argued that their strict stance on not readmitting those who had lapsed into idolatry during persecutions contradicted the Church's teachings on God's mercy and forgiveness.

§243 Cyprian emphasized the importance of the Church's authority, the role of bishops as successors of the apostles, and the need for unity within the Christian community. He urged Novatian and his followers to return to the fold of the church and to embrace the principles of love, compassion, and forgiveness.

He also wrote "On The Unity of the Church" that year describing at more length the foundation for unity.

Donatism 311 AD

§244 Donatism was the result of the last persecution by Emperor Decius. The controversy between the Donatists of Carthage and the established church was due to how people were received back into the church after denying their faith, turning over the Scriptures for destruction, and rendering homage to Caesar. They especially felt that those who had done that had disqualified themselves as ministers.

How they were dealt with is the subject of the next church age and will be covered later.

3. Challenges of the Age

§245 The source of the challenges faced in the Smyrna church age were philosophical from within and the political (worldly) from without.

• Bibliology**Effect of Montanism**

§246 The church was faced with claims of new revelation especially from Montanism that caused greater scrutiny of the canon for the New Testament.

The Allegorical Method

See also p. 28.

§247 The greater effect on Bibliology came from the growing influence of philosophy, especially through the Alexandrian School and the allegorical method of interpretation. Two outstanding characters as examples were Clement of Alexandria and Origen.

Clement (150-215 AD), who headed the school from AD 190 to 202, corrupted the Christian faith by mixing it with the worldly philosophy and allegoricalism of Philo. He taught many false doctrines, including purgatory, and believed that most men would eventually be saved even though Jesus said only a few would be (Mt. 7:14). "Clement saw the literal meaning of Scripture as being a 'starting point' for interpretation. Although it was 'suitable for the mass of Christians,' God revealed himself to the spiritually advanced through the 'deeper meaning' of Scripture. In every passage, a deeper or additional meaning existed beyond the primary or immediate sense" – wayoflife.org/reports/fundamental_doctrine_of_the_pre-tribulatino_rapture.php

Origen (185-253 AD) was the first to reduce the allegorical method of interpretation to a system. The allegorical interpretation of Scripture had been extensively employed by the great Jewish-Alexandrian thinkers, Aristobulus and Philo. It had been taken up by the Gnostics, and was practiced by most of the Christian writers of the early time. The aim of the allegorical interpretation was to harmonize the Scriptures, which were regarded as divinely inspired, with the Platonic modes of thought, which had become, as it were, part and parcel of the being of such Christians as Origen. Had Origen been shut up to a literal interpretation of the Old Testament, he would, probably, like the Gnostics, have rejected the Old Testament and the God of the Old Testament.

He held, therefore, in accordance with the Platonic trichotomy, that every passage of Scripture has three senses, the literal, the moral, and the spiritual.

To the *literal* (earthly, sensual, carnal Jewish) sense, he attached little importance, save as a basis for the higher senses; but his chief merit as an exegete consists in the fact that he did industriously seek to ascertain this literal sense. The literal sense is not always true.

But there underlies every passage a deeper sense (celestial, intelligible, symbolical, mystical, secret), which is distinguished into the *moral* and the *spiritual* sense.

The *moral* sense is that which relates to matters connected with religious life. The *spiritual* sense is that which relates to the heavenly life, the world to come.

...His method of Scripture interpretation was soon adopted throughout the church (except the Antiochian school, which went to the opposite extreme of adhering rigidly to the literal meaning), and prevailed throughout the Middle Ages. In this particular Origen's influence was bad, and only bad. Yet his views on the literal meaning have always been of great utility.

...The effect of his bold, wild speculations was two-fold: (1) Many were led astray by his example, while (2) others were frightened by his boldness into a denial of the right of freedom of thought.

(Newman 1, 191,192)

It was no wonder that Gnosticism was able to have its influence with such a mindset of imagination as authority.

2Cor 10:4-5 (For the weapons of our warfare *are* not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;)

5Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;

1Cor 1:21-23 For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe.

22For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom:

23But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness;

- **Theology Proper**

- **Pneumatology**

Apart from resisting the effect of Montanism and Gnosticism, there was no development of theology of the Holy Spirit.

- **Christology**

Gnosticism

Gnostic views became established proposing that Christ was less than God (p. 97).

- **Anthropology**

- **Harmartiology**

- **Soteriology**

- **Ecclesiology**

Episcopacy

§248 The effort to establish the unity of churches under one supreme pontif won't occur until the next church age of Pergamos. Even then, it will grow in power and not reach its zenith until the Great Schism (1054 AD, p. 145) when the Eastern churches split from the Western resisting the efforts of the Bishop of Rome as Supreme Pontif over all churches. 1054 to 1250 will be called the Papal Monarchy period. During the Smyrna age, unity of the churches was nothing like a universal institution.

Collegiality of Bishops

§249 During the early centuries, churches operated more as a as a confederation. The concept of collegiality emphasized the equal participation and shared responsibility of bishops within their respective regions or patriarchates (the idea of a patriarchy was developed over time and was not an original concept in Christianity, p. 119). While there was recognition of the historical significance of certain sees (seats of authority), such as Rome and later Constantinople, the authority of each bishop was seen as derived from their ordination and participation in an apostolic ministry.

§250 Important matters were often discussed and decided in councils that included bishops from various regions. These councils were convened to address theological disputes, formulate doctrines, and make decisions on ecclesiastical matters. Some of the most significant early councils included the First Council of Nicaea (325 AD), the First Council of Constantinople (381 AD), and the Council of Ephesus (431 AD).

§251 While there was a recognition of the historical significance of certain patriarchates (like Rome), the authority of these patriarchates (p. 119) did not necessarily imply unilateral decision-making power over *other* sees.

Ignatius XX d. c. 108-140 AD

§252 The earliest writing that explicitly addresses the hierarchical relationship between bishops and presbyters (elders) within the early Christian Church is generally attributed to Ignatius of Antioch. Ignatius was a bishop of Antioch in the late 1st and early 2nd centuries and wrote several letters to various Christian communities during his journey to Rome, where he was martyred.

In his letters, Ignatius emphasizes the authority and role of the bishop as distinct from that of the presbyters. He advocates for unity and obedience to the bishop as a means of preserving the unity of the Church. Ignatius writes about the importance of the bishop in terms of unity, proper teaching, and maintaining the order of the Church.

Let all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ follows his Father, and the presbytery as the Apostles; and to the deacons pay respect, as to God's commandment; let no one do anything pertaining to the Church apart from the bishop. (Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Smyrnaeans*, 8:1)

Take heed, then, to have but one Eucharist. For there is one flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ, and one cup to [show forth] the unity of His blood; one altar; as there is one bishop, along with the presbytery and deacons, my fellow-servants: that so, whatsoever you do, you may do it according to [the will of] God. (Ignatius of Antioch, *Letter to the Philadelphians*, 4:1)

§253 These quotes indicate that Ignatius saw the bishop as the focal point of unity and authority within the Church, with the presbyters serving in a ministry role under the bishop's authority. It is important to note that Ignatius' views reflect an early stage in the development of church governance, and the precise nature of the bishop-presbyter relationship continued to evolve in subsequent centuries.

Cyprian 250 AD

§254 Cyprian in *On the Unity of the Church* recognized an equality of bishops without elevating one above another:

The Lord speaks to Peter, saying, "I say unto you, that you are Peter; and upon this rock I will build my Church,"...**And although to all the apostles, after His resurrection, He gives an equal power, and says, "As the Father has sent me, even so send I you"...**that He might set forth unity, He arranged by His authority the origin of that unity, as beginning from one. **Assuredly the rest of the apostles were also the same as was Peter, endowed with a like partnership both of honour and power; but the beginning proceeds from unity**...And this unity we ought firmly to hold and assert, especially those of us that are bishops who preside in the Church, that we may also prove the episcopate itself to be one and undivided

Growth of a Monarchial Episcopacy

§255 Monarchial [one ruler] episcopacy was one of the results of its contest with pagan intolerance and Gnostic heresy. From the beginning the Roman church manifested something of the practical spirit that little by little secured for it a place of leadership and authority among the churches. Its location in the great metropolis, its practical benevolence, its freedom from extreme doctrinal developments, due in part to its poverty in speculative theologians, gave it a great advantage over other churches. (Newman 1, 170)

Irenaeus had insisted upon the unity of the church; but it was a spiritual unity, resulting from community of headship in Christ and from community of belief, as handed down through a succession of presbyters, *not* an external, organic unity. The general tendency of the church from this time forward was toward making religion external; and the idea of the spiritual unity of the church was easily transformed into that of outward unity. The same tendency that led to the centralization of power in the bishop, for the sake of securing unity and order, led to a centralization of power in a head of the universal church. If the church was an outward, organic unity, it needed a single mouthpiece, just as much as did a single community. Controversies were arising everywhere among bishops. A supreme bishop—a bishop of bishops—was needed to adjudicate upon these controversies. There arose thus in the minds of Cyprian and others a desire for such a unifying, authoritative power; but it is noticeable that such a power was desired only on the supposition that the authoritative head would decide justly, in other words, on Cyprian's side. The thought never occurred to Cyprian, perhaps, of submitting to an unjust decision, in other words, one against himself.

In his work, *De Unitate Ecclesiae*, Cyprian makes use of such language as this: "The primacy was given to Peter, that one church of Christ and one chair might be pointed out." "Does he believe that he is in the faith, who does not hold this unity of the church? Does he trust that he is in the church who strives against and resists the church? who deserts the *Cathedra Petri* on which the church has been founded?" "There is one episcopate, by the single members of which each part is held in solidity." "Just as there are many rays of the sun, but one light; and many branches of the tree, but one strength, founded on the tenacious root; and since from one source many streams flow forth, the numerosity may seem diffused by the bounty of the surging stream, nevertheless unity in origin is preserved. Pluck a ray of the sun from the body, the unity of the light does not receive a division." "He cannot have God for his Father who has not the church for his mother." (Newman 1 178,179)

The officer formerly known by the name of elder, bishop, or presbyter (terms exactly synonymous in the New Testament) became now distinguished by the elevation of the bishop above his brethren, and each of the above terms was carried out into a distinction of places in the Christian church. The minister, whose congregation increased from the suburbs of his town and [neighborhood], considered the parts from which his charge emanated, as territories marking the boundary of his authority; and all those presbyters sent by him into surrounding stations to conduct evening or other services, acknowledged the pastor of the mother interest, as bishop of the district: this view of the pastor, connected with his charge of the baptistery, gave importance to his station and office which entailed an evil. *Associations of ministers and churches, which at first were formed in Greece, became common throughout the empire.* These mutual unions for the management of spiritual affairs, led to the choice of a president, which aided distinction amongst ministers of religion. In those degenerating times, aspiring men saw each other in varied elevations; consequently jealousy, ambition, and strife ensued, and every evil work followed. The minister having the largest interest under his superintendence; another whose usefulness in the Christian interest had been evident; and a third whose popular declaiming talents had raised him into general approbation; led to distinctions and superior stations, which at last became vested in the metropolitan minister. Places of distinction to which ministers were eligible, prompted the ambitious to use every device to gain the ascendant position; and every part of the word of God, with every scriptural example to support such distinctions and proceedings, was quoted, enforced, and practiced. The learning of the philosopher contributed to popularity, and where the [vote] of the community were to be taken, this acquisition was important to the aspirant; while the Jewish distinctions of ministers gave force and example to place and power. It was some time before the bishops, presbyters, and deacons, now very distinct classes of men, could persuade the people *that they* succeeded to the character, rights, and privileges of the Jewish priesthood. So far as those ministers were successful they opened a door to the adoption of every abrogated rite; and one evidence of success soon appeared, in the *abundance of wealth* conferred on the clergy.

(Orchard 54,55)

Baptism

§256 For the first 250 years, baptism was only offered to people who were able to exercise faith. This is reflected in how Origen (185-253 AD) argued against an accusation of baptizing infants. His later writings appeared to endorse baptism of infants for the removal of original sin.

One of the most remarkable things about this century is, that it originated the great baptismal controversy, which, in one form or another, has been kept alive in the great Christian bodies ever since, and is as rife today as ever. At that time it related to those who had 'lapsed' from the faith, and there were three parties to this controversy. One, would not restore them on any condition; a second, would take them back without much restriction; and a third, led by Cyprian, would readmit them after due repentance. **Then, about the middle of the century, the immersion of babes began to creep into the Churches, under the new sacerdotal order of things. Toward the close of the second century, Celsus had charged the Christians with initiating the 'mere child' into their Churches, while the pagans initiated only 'intelligent' persons.** The qualifying word 'mere,' indicates that he wished to throw the reflection upon them, that children who were little more than babes were taken into their fellowship. This insinuation Origen repelled, in his *Contra Celsum*, as a false

accusation and a calumny. His words are: 'In reply to these accusations, we say...**We exhort sinners to come to the instruction that teaches them not to sin, and the unintelligent to come to that which produces in them understanding, and the little children to rise in elevation of thought to the man...When those of the exhorted that make progress show that they have been cleansed by the Word, and, as much as possible, have lived a better life, then we invite them to be initiated, amongst us.**' However young, then, the 'mere child' might be, Origen says that they did not admit him until he had been 'exhorted,' 'cleansed by the Word,' had begun to live 'a better life,' and then he was initiated only on invitation – 'we invite them.'

– Armitage, 161

§257 By 252 AD, at the Council of Carthage, baptism of infants was introduced.

In Africa, helpless infants were inhumanly sacrificed to the hideous gods, at this time. **Fidus, a generous-hearted country pastor, who labored in this dark province, wrote to Cyprian, at Carthage, to know whether new-born babes might be baptized.** If they could, of course, this would save them, whether they died or not, and would be an act of divine grace of special efficacy, where the cruel heathen stole them to offer in sacrifice. Cyprian's heart was as tender as that of his country brother, and he wanted all the children's souls saved, of course. But the proposition staggered him, and he dared not venture to trust his own judgment in so new and serious a case. It happened that a council of sixty-six pastors was in session at Carthage at the time, A.D. 252, called to consider various Church matters, but especially the subject of rebaptizing those who had received heretical baptism. **In his perplexity he submitted the question of Fidus to these brethren; a thing which he need not have done, had it been customary to baptize babes from the Apostles down. Tertullian had been pastor of the Church of which Cyprian was now pastor, twenty years before this, and had baptized legal minors into its fellowship, but not babes. Cyprian's course and the decision of the council show that it was a new question to them all, for it decided that they *might* be baptized when eight days old, but was careful not to insist that they *must* be; further showing that this was a different sort of children's baptism from that which the Church had previously practiced under the pastorate of Tertullian.**

– Armitage, 162

• Eschatology

Uniformly Premillennial

§258 The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age is the prominent chiliasm, or millennarianism, that is the belief of a visible reign of Christ in glory on earth with the risen saints for a thousand years, before the general resurrection and judgment. It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius; while Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius (as afterwards Jerome and Augustin) opposed it.

(Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, 1191)

Montanist Excess

§259 Due to the excesses of the Montanists (see p. 100), extreme views of the Millennium became problematic. However, it will not be until the 4th century that the

allegorical method of interpretation would be used to promote amillennialism.

Blurring the distinction between Israel and the Church

The early Church fathers swiftly abandoned the biblical distinction between Israel and the Church due to several key factors. First, the growing conflict between Judaism and early Christianity fueled antagonism. This hostility intensified with Christians not supporting the Jewish revolt against Rome in AD 66-70. The Jewish Council of Jamnia's declaration of curses on those departing from standard faith further deepened the divide.

The second factor was the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 and the subsequent expulsion of Jews in AD 132-135. These events led early Christians to interpret these defeats as God's judgment on Judaism and validation of Christianity, causing them to relinquish hope for Israel's restoration.

The third reason was the Jewish rejection of Christ. As time passed, the Church recognized that Jewish leaders wouldn't change their stance on Jesus, shifting the perception of Jews from potential converts to opponents of the gospel.

The fourth factor was the increasingly non-Jewish composition of the Church. As the Church became predominantly Gentile, the hardening of Jewish hearts and fading hopes for Jewish conversion allowed the Gentile-led Church to criticize Judaism and embrace replacement theology more readily.

In essence, the early Church fathers believed that due to Israel's historical disobedience and rejection of Jesus, God permanently severed Israel as His chosen people. The faithful of the Church era, alongside past patriarchs and saints, were seen as the "new Israel." They would inherit Israel's promises, fulfilled in the millennial kingdom.

– summarized from
bible.org/article/theology-adrift-early-church-fathers-and-their-views-eschatology

V . PERGAMOS 300-450

THE COMPROMISED CHURCH

(WITH THE SEAT OF SATAN)

Rev 2:12-17 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos write; These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

13I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is*: and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

14But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balac to cast a stumblingblock before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

15So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

16Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

17He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth saving he that receiveth *it*.

§260 This church age has the *seat of Satan*, or the head of the pagan mystery religions, that was joined to the churches that dominated this time period through its new connection with the Roman government. That seat was effectively transferred from Pergamos to the Caesars and then by several steps to the Bishop of Rome. This would change the character of the church dramatically.

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Pergamos

§261 This church age begins with Constantine's Edict of Milan in 313 AD ending persecution of the church while granting toleration of all religions, including Christianity. The end of the age corresponds with Pope Leo I (Leo the Great, r. 440-461 AD), claiming papal supremacy over all churches and the Fall of the Roman Empire, 476 AD. The informal connection to the Roman Empire with its pagan influences began the age. The formal connection to the state opened the borders for paganism's easy access to infiltrate Christianity. The popes began filling in the void of power after the fall of the empire at the end of the age.

2. Character of the Age

• The Edict of Milan – Freedom to worship or tied to an anchor?

§262 Constantine the Great did not make Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire during his reign. Becoming the official religion would happen in 380 AD. However, he played a pivotal role in the Edict of Milan, which was a significant milestone in the history of religious tolerance and freedom.

In 313 AD, Emperor Constantine, along with his co-emperor Licinius, issued the edict which granted religious tolerance to all religions, not just Christianity, though Christianity was obviously the intended beneficiary.

§263 The role of Constantine in facilitating this change established the blending of the state with the church. Constantine's involvement in the affairs of the church can be characterized by several key actions and policies

- Constantine's personal conversion to Christianity and his favorable treatment of the Christian Church further encouraged the growth of Christianity within the empire.
- Christians were allowed to practice their faith openly and enjoy protection from state-sponsored persecution.
- Constantine played a role in convening and presiding over the First Ecumenical Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. This council aimed to address the theological controversies of the time, particularly the Arian controversy, which concerned the nature of Jesus Christ. By presiding over the council, Constantine demonstrated his interest as emperor in resolving theological disputes within the Church and maintaining unity.
- Churches enjoyed privileges such as tax exemptions and the return of confiscated property. Constantine also donated resources to construct churches and support the clergy. This support from the imperial government bolstered the Church's influence and resources.
- Constantine occasionally intervened in internal Church disputes, attempting to reconcile conflicting factions.
- Constantine issued an imperial decree in 321 AD that declared Sunday as a day of rest throughout the empire. Although the decree was not explicitly a Christian measure, it accommodated the Christian practice of gathering for worship on Sundays, further solidifying the significance of the Christian day of worship.
- Through various benefits, pagans were encouraged to join the new religion. Now many would join to fulfill social needs without true regard for the spiritual needs that arise from conviction for sin. Social compliance became a great motivator for joining. With the influx of those who were not genuinely converted came an influx of pagan notions.
- Constantine's patronage and support of Christianity influenced the development of

The Big Idea:
The state connection looked like an open door but was an anchor tied to the church to sink it.

a close relationship between the Church and the state. This relationship evolved over the centuries and had significant implications for both the Church's influence on politics and the state's involvement in religious matters.

§264 While some of these effects might seem favorable, the partnership of the church with the state also brought problems.

The oppressed become the oppressors with state sanction

§265 The punishment for heresy in the *ante-Nicene* church was primarily ecclesiastical, involving reproof, deposition, and excommunication. This had no impact on civil status. However, when the church and state became united, temporal penalties such as property confiscation, exile, and death were introduced by the civil authorities, with church approval. This was done in imitation of the Mosaic code but contradicted the spirit and example of Christ and the apostles.

§266 Constantine initiated this trend with edicts against the Donatists in 316 AD. Valentinian I similarly prohibited the public worship of Manichaeans in 371 AD. Following the defeat of the Arians by the second Ecumenical Council, Theodosius the Great used legal penalties to enforce belief uniformity, issuing fifteen edicts between 381 and 394 AD. Honorius in 408 AD, Arcadius, the younger Theodosius, and Justinian in 529 AD also followed this approach.

§267 Under these imperial decrees, heretics—defined as open dissenters from the imperial state religion—were stripped of public offices and the right to public worship, as well as the ability to possess or pass on property and create enforceable contracts. They were subject to fines, banishment, physical punishment, and even death.

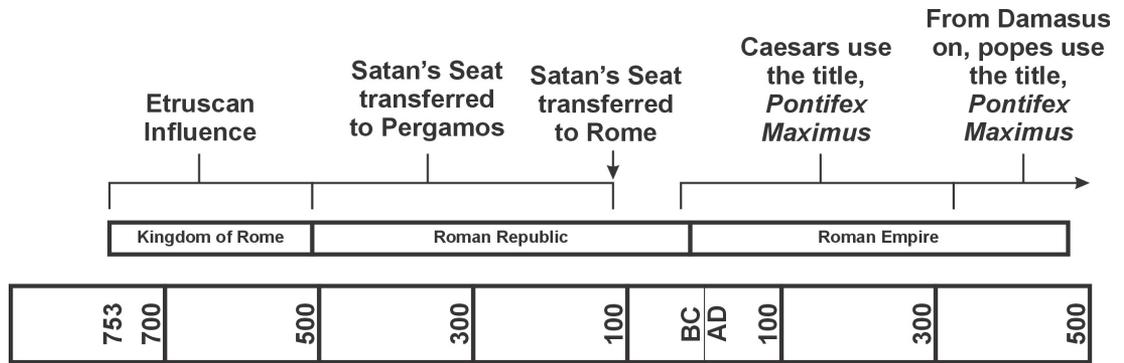
§268 Over the course of church history, oppressed groups *often* became oppressors themselves whenever they achieved political power.

Institutionalized bad doctrine

§269 Institutionalized Christianity enabled bad doctrine and practice to become entrenched in the church under the authority of the state. No longer were pastors able to have the final say in the management and the protection of doctrinal purity in their church. The corruption would be more pervasive in the next church age of Thyatira, but it was in this Pergamos age that the corrupting elements of paganism became introduced.

• Pontifex Maximus

§270 The highest claim to papal power as Pontifex Maximus would come in the time of Gregory VII (papacy 1073-1085) during the time of the Papal Monarchy with a claim to universal spiritual and temporal power with the right to depose secular rulers. The pontifical claims evolved from the paganizing influence of sanction of the Roman government.



Evolution of the title *Pontifex Maximus*

The Etruscan Influence

§271 The development of the Pontifex Maximus and incorporation into the Roman Catholic system traces back to antiquity, but we will pick up its history with the founding of the Roman Republic since the Roman government was the connection to the Roman Catholic system.

The Big Idea:
The early Roman connection to the role of Pontifex Maximus

§272 The Roman historian Plutarch (46-119 AD) wrote that the second king of Rome, Numa Pompilius (reign 715-674 BC), forbade the making of images and that for 170 years until about 545 BC, no images were allowed in the Roman temples. While Rome was a kingdom they were under the influence of the Etruscans (immediately to the north of Rome). After Rome became a republic (509 BC) the Etruscans ultimately became dominated by Rome by 396 BC. It was in this political setting that the title *Pontifex Maximus* was established.

- Etruscan Influence: The Etruscans had an influence on Roman religious practices, including the development of the office of the "Pontifex Maximus." The Etruscans had their own religious hierarchy, and elements of their religious system were incorporated into early Roman religious structures.
- Early Origins: The title "Pontifex Maximus" is believed to date back to the early days of the Roman Republic. It was one of the highest religious offices in ancient Rome. The "pontifices" (plural of "pontifex") were responsible for overseeing the religious practices of the state, including the maintenance of religious traditions, the regulation of ceremonies, and the administration of religious institutions.
- Republican Period: During the Roman Republic (509 - 27 BC), the title "Pontifex Maximus" was a prestigious position, and it was typically held by a member of the Roman aristocracy. The pontiffs were responsible for maintaining religious order, interpreting religious law, and managing the calendar.
- Julius Caesar: Julius Caesar held the title of "Pontifex Maximus" during his

lifetime, starting in 63 BC. This was part of his political maneuvering to solidify his authority and appeal to traditional Roman values, despite the evolving political landscape.

§273 The Pontifex Maximus became united to the *head* of government under Julius Caesar. The rule of Julius Caesar triggered the end of the Roman Republic to become the Roman Empire. Julius Caesar's adopted son, Caesar Augustus, instigated the Cult of Caesar and promoted the Imperial Cult, establishing a divine identity for the caesars, which was very compatible with their role as Pontifex Maximus.

The Pergamos connection

§274 The Sovereign Pontiff of Rome, influenced by Etruscan idolatry, was a branch from the original Babylonian system, but not its true representation. The legitimate *Babylonian* Pontiff's seat was outside the Roman Empire, initially in Pergamos after the fall of Babylon. This later became one of the seven churches

of Asia. Following the death of Belshazzar and the expulsion of the Chaldean priesthood from Babylon by the Medo-Persian kings (c. 539 BC), this seat was established in Pergamos. For many centuries, it served as "Satan's seat" (Revelation 2:13). With the favor of the deified kings of Pergamos, this location was assumed to be Satan's preferred abode.

Initially, there was no direct link between the Roman Pontiff and Pergamos, and the two hierarchies seemed separate. However, over time, the Roman Pontificate and that of Pergamos became intertwined. Pergamos itself became part of the Roman Empire when Attalus III, the final king of Pergamos, bequeathed all his dominions to the Roman people in 133 BC.

§275 After the kingdom of Pergamos merged with the Roman dominions, there was no one openly claiming the full dignity of the old title held by the kings of Pergamos. The authority of the Roman Pontiffs had also been curtailed. Yet, when Julius Caesar, who was both Pontifex Maximus and Emperor, became the supreme civil ruler and head of the Roman religion, he gained the powers and functions of the legitimate Babylonian Pontiff.

§276 Julius Caesar seemingly asserted these powers and may have even claimed the divine status of Attalus, along with the kingdom that Attalus had left to the Romans. His well-known watchword, "Venus Genetrix," suggested that Venus was the mother of the Julian lineage, implying that he was "The Son" of the great goddess. This positioned him as a central figure in both the Roman state and religion.

(Adapted from Hyslop, Ch. 7, Section 1)

The Big Idea:
The connection of the Pontifex Maximus to the Babylonian Mystery Religions

The Caesars

§277 Julius Caesar, as the Pontifex Maximus of Rome, held a unique religious and political position within the Roman Republic. The title of Pontifex Maximus was the highest religious office in ancient Rome, overseeing the religious rituals, festivals, and ceremonies of the Roman state religion. While the primary role of

the Pontifex Maximus was related to religious matters, Caesar and other Roman leaders also recognized the political influence that came with the position.

The Big Idea:
The Roman Emperor and the connection to the Pontifex Maximus

- By holding this position, Caesar was seen as a custodian of religious traditions and a mediator between the Roman people and the gods.
- Caesar used his role as Pontifex Maximus to perform and oversee religious rituals, festivals, and ceremonies that were important to the Roman people.
- Caesar's political ambitions extended beyond his religious role. He leveraged his authority as Pontifex Maximus to forge alliances, build networks, and cultivate relationships with influential individuals and groups.
- As Pontifex Maximus, Caesar had the authority to shape and influence religious practices. He could introduce reforms, make decisions about the construction of temples, and oversee the calendar of religious festivals. This gave him a degree of control over the religious and cultural life of Rome.

The tradition of the Roman Emperors as Pontifex Maximus continued on after Julius Caesar:

- Augustus (Caesar Augustus): The first Roman emperor, Augustus, held the title of Pontifex Maximus and used it to reinforce his authority and project an image of religious devotion. He saw himself as the restorer of traditional Roman values and sought to maintain the religious institutions of the state.
- Tiberius (Tiberius Caesar Augustus): The second Roman emperor, Tiberius, succeeded Augustus and also assumed the role of Pontifex Maximus. His reign marked a period of relative stability in the early Roman Empire.
- Caligula (Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus): Caligula, infamous for his erratic behavior, also held the title of Pontifex Maximus during his tumultuous reign. His rule was marked by extravagance and authoritarian tendencies.
- Claudius (Tiberius Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus): Claudius, who became emperor after Caligula's assassination, continued the tradition of holding the title of Pontifex Maximus. He focused on administrative and legal reforms during his rule.
- Nero (Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus): Nero, known for his controversial reign and persecution of Christians, was another emperor who assumed the title of Pontifex Maximus.
- Domitian (Titus Flavius Caesar Domitianus Augustus): Domitian, the last emperor

of the Flavian dynasty, also held the title of Pontifex Maximus. His rule was marked by increasing autocracy and a focus on maintaining imperial authority.

The Pope as Pontifex Maximus

§278 Pope Damasus I (papacy 366-384 AD) was the first to claim the title of Pontifex Maximus. It had previously been associated only with the Roman emperors and their religious roles. Damasus's role in this regard was part of his broader efforts to assert

the spiritual authority of the papacy and establish the Bishop of Rome as a central figure in matters of faith and doctrine. By adopting the title "Pontifex Maximus," Damasus sought to emphasize the spiritual leadership of the Pope and align it with the role of guiding the Church in matters of religious practice and doctrine.

§279 One of the primary challenges Damasus faced was the existence of rival claimants to the papal throne. His election was contested by a faction supporting a deacon named Ursinus, leading to a schism within the Roman Church. The political turmoil associated with this schism created a need for Damasus to assert his authority and legitimacy as the rightful Pope. The situation escalated to the point where violence and unrest erupted in Rome.

§280 Emperor Gratian intervened in the conflict and sided with Pope Damasus. Gratian recognized Damasus as the legitimate Pope of Rome and provided imperial support for his claim to the papacy. This support not only helped stabilize the situation in Rome but also affirmed Damasus's position as the recognized spiritual leader of the Roman Christian community.

§281 The title of Pontifex Maximus had a historical association with the Roman emperors, who held both political and religious power. By adopting the title, Damasus aimed to assert the authority of the papacy over religious matters and to counter the claims of his rivals.

§282 Damasus justified his use of the title "Pontifex Maximus" by aligning it with the authority of Peter, who he considered the founder of the Roman Church and its first bishop. He presented himself as Peter's successor and thus the legitimate spiritual leader of the Roman Christian community. Damasus positioned the papacy as the central authority for religious guidance and orthodoxy, while the political power of the emperors was waning.

§283 The use of the title by the popes became standard, even though it did not have Biblical origin.

The Big Idea:
The Bishop of Rome claiming the title of the Pontifex Maximus

• When did the Church of Rome become the Roman Catholic Church?

From collegiality to patriarchy

§284 The reason understanding catholicity, or a universal church, is so crucial is that having a central authority in a universal church with a universal head that was working in concert with the kingdom of the world

would absolutely co-opt the responsibility of the churches of the Kingdom of God. Although in our time it is impossible to practically exercise that kind of power and authority, it was far more significant in the Middle Ages. Nevertheless, churches labor under the pressure from the presumption that Catholicism is the standard for churches. Instead, *non*-standard churches are the actual Biblical standard as each church attempts to model their church according to Biblical principles.

§285 Although there were already schismatic church movements that operated separately from the larger body of churches, there was no sense of a universal church as an institution. They might have had conceptions of spiritual unity as a confederation, but not as a *single* institution under the ultimate governance of one head.

§286 Churches in metropolitan areas and surrounding areas became organized into regions under the jurisdiction of a major church. These jurisdictions were known as a patriarchy (*highest or primary father*). The various patriarchates included Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem and operated generally operated with an understanding of collegiality among bishops, which meant that decisions were made through collective consensus and consultation rather than by a single hierarchical authority.

§287 The concept of collegiality emphasized the equal participation and shared responsibility of bishops within their respective regions or patriarchates. While there was recognition of the historical significance of certain sees (seats of authority), such as Rome and later Constantinople, the authority of each bishop was seen as derived from their ordination and participation in an apostolic ministry.

§288 In the early Christian Church, important matters were often discussed and decided in councils that included bishops from various regions. These councils were convened to address theological disputes, formulate doctrines, and make decisions on ecclesiastical matters. While there was a recognition of the historical significance of certain patriarchates (like Rome), the authority of these patriarchates did not necessarily imply unilateral decision-making power over other sees.

§289 "Canon 6" is a passage from the First Council of Nicaea that speaks of the recognition of established sees and their influence:

"Let the ancient customs in Egypt, Libya, and Pentapolis prevail, that the Bishop of Alexandria have jurisdiction in all these, since the like is customary for the Bishop of Rome also. Likewise in Antioch and the other provinces, let the Churches retain their privileges. And this is to be universally understood, that if any one be made

The Big Idea:
The birthing of the Roman Catholic Church under the Pope

bishop without the consent of the Metropolitan, the great Synod has declared that such a man ought not to be a bishop."

From catholic to Catholic

§290 At this point, churches viewed catholicity as the spiritual unity of all believers. As an issue of ecclesiastical organization, it is better to think in terms of all believers and churches being members of the Kingdom of God because one holy catholic (universal) church will not be a reality until the Millennium.

§291 We distinguish between being catholic (universal) generically and Catholic as a single institution that incorporate all churches under its jurisdiction. There are various ways and times that could be identified when this happened:

- In effect when Constantine began to promote Christianity with the power of his patronage and the state starting in 313 AD.
- When Damasus claimed to be the Pontifex Maximus around 366 AD (see p. 119).
- When Nicene Christianity was officially recognized as the state religion of the Roman Empire by the Edict of Thessalonica in the year 380 AD. This edict was issued by Emperor Theodosius I and his sons as co-emperors.
- When separatist church movements were persecuted (see *The oppressed become the oppressors*, p. 115) starting in 381 AD after the Edict of Thessalonica.
- Leo the Great (Leo I, r. 440-461) known for his efforts to assert the authority of the Roman See and his role in theological matters. He asserted the concept of the "Petrine doctrine," emphasizing the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter, the apostle. Leo I's teachings laid the groundwork for future popes to assert their authority over the universal Church.
- Gregory the Great (Gregory I, r. 590-604) asserted the idea that the Bishop of Rome, as the successor of Peter, held a universal jurisdiction over the entire Church. He believed that all bishops were accountable to the Pope and that he had the authority to intervene in the affairs of other churches, even in distant regions.
- The name *Roman Catholic Church* was not used until the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century.

The first pope?

§292 Today, people are familiar with the Roman Catholic's assertion that Peter was the first in a line of succession of popes. This concept is used to support the claim of authority of the pope and the Roman Catholic church. However, the concept of a pope was something that evolved over time. Constantine's actions became the catalyst that began the change of any sense of church leadership into a universal papacy over time. There were critical claims made from time to time but the key and most potent claim of universal authority was not made until the First Vatican Council (1869-1870 AD), during which the doctrine of papal infallibility was defined. This doctrine states that under specific circumstances, the Pope is considered infallible in matters of faith and morals when speaking *ex cathedra* (from the chair of Peter) to the entire Church. This decision reaffirmed and solidified the primacy of the Pope as the supreme authority in the Catholic Church.

Significant moments of advancement of papal authority include:

- Damasus I (r. 366-384 AD) as the first to claim Pontifex Maximus (see p. 119). Before Damasus, the popes might not have known they were popes.
- Siricius (384-389 AD) as the first to use the title pope
- Leo I (Leo the Great, r. 440-461 AD) when he claimed authority as the successor to Peter
- Gregory I (Gregory the Great, r. 590-604 AD) when he claimed authority over all churches. He was the first formally to employ the titles *Servus servorum Dei* and *Pontifex Maximus*.

• The Donatist Controversy (313 AD)

§293 The Donatist movement emerged as a result of the persecutions under Diocletian starting in 303 AD. Under the ministry of Donatus Magnus, a fellowship of churches developed that were in competition with the churches that were recognized by the mainstream churches.

The Big Idea:
Local control stood in contrast to the claim to a central control by a "catholic" church.

§294 The primary issue that led to the foundation of the Donatist movement was the treatment of Christian clergy and their response during the persecution when some Christian clergy and individuals, under threat of torture or death, handed over sacred texts or church property to the authorities to avoid persecution. These clergy members became known as "traditors." This situation gave rise to a theological and ecclesiastical controversy about the validity of baptism and communion administered by these compromised clergy.

§295 The Donatists took a "rigorist" stance, arguing that the ordinances performed by traditor clergy were invalid. They believed that the moral purity and integrity of the minister were critical. According to the Donatists, only those who had remained steadfast and endured persecution without compromising their faith were fit to administer baptism and communion.

§296 The controversy escalated when a Carthaginian bishop named Caecilian was consecrated by a bishop who had allegedly been a traditor. This consecration led to a schism in the North African Church, with the Donatists refusing to recognize Caecilian's legitimacy and electing their own bishop. The division between the Donatists and the consensus of churches that saw themselves as mainstream deepened.

§297 The Donatist movement gained popularity among the rural population of North Africa, and it was often associated with a strong sense of African identity and resistance to Roman influence. They portrayed themselves as the "pure" Church and labeled the "mainstream" churches as compromised.

§298 Although the Donatists were a rival group *within* the unity of the system of churches in that day, they represent the efforts for *local* control rather than a central hierarchy control. They resisted and did not recognize the findings of two councils (313-314 AD) that were called to settle the matter. The Donatists were later persecuted and

faded from history (see p. 115).

• **The Arian Controversy**

§299 Arius (c. 256–336 AD) was a Christian presbyter and theologian from Alexandria, Egypt. He was known for his charismatic preaching and clear articulation of his theological views. His primary theological concern was the relationship

between God the Father and Jesus Christ. He proposed that Jesus, while divine, was a created being and not of the same eternal essence as God the Father.

Arius believed that if Christ were fully God, it would compromise the absolute uniqueness and transcendence of the Father. He argued that there was a time when Christ did not exist and that he was created by the Father before the rest of creation.

After the Council of Nicaea, Arius was exiled from Alexandria by Emperor Constantine the Great, who was a proponent of the Nicene Creed. However, the controversy persisted, and different emperors held varying views on the matter. In 335 AD, Emperor Constantine allowed Arius to return to Alexandria, but Arius died under disputed circumstances that same year. Some sources suggest he died suddenly, while others claim he was poisoned.

The Big Idea:
Arianism was one of the first denials of the deity of Christ

The Council of Nicaea (325 AD)

§300 The Arian controversy intensified in the early 4th century. The debate over Christ's nature and divinity became a central theological issue. In 325 AD, Emperor Constantine convened the First Council of Nicaea in Nicaea (modern-day Iznik, Turkey) to address the Arian controversy. The council aimed to find a consensus on the nature of Christ and the divinity of the Son.

Athanasius, a deacon from Alexandria who later became bishop, was a key opponent of Arianism and played a significant role in advocating for the Nicene Creed's affirmation of the Son's consubstantiality (*homoousios*) with the Father.

The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD)

Unsettled business

§301 In the decades following the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, theological disputes continued to arise, particularly concerning the nature of Christ. The Arian controversy had been resolved at Nicaea, affirming the Nicene Creed's declaration of Christ's consubstantiality (of the same substance) with the Father. However, new questions emerged, especially regarding the relationship between Christ's divine and human natures.

§302 One major controversy revolved around the teaching of Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius's views were perceived by some as dividing

Christ into two distinct persons—one divine and one human. This perspective sparked debates and concerns over the unity of Christ's person.

§303 The council brought together hundreds of bishops from the Eastern and Western parts of the Roman Empire. The council's sessions lasted from October 8 to November 1, 451 AD. The bishops engaged in debates and discussions, ultimately formulating a Christological definition known as the Chalcedonian Definition.

The hypostatic union

§304 The term "hypostatic union" conveys the idea that in the one person of Jesus Christ, there are two distinct natures—the divine nature and the human nature—united in a hypostasis, which refers to an individual reality or existence. This term was used to articulate the orthodox position that Christ is fully God and fully human, without the two natures being confused, divided, or altered.

§305 The Chalcedonian Definition affirmed the following points:

- Christ is one person with two distinct and unconfused natures: a fully divine nature and a fully human nature.
- The two natures are united "inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably."
- The divine and human natures remain distinct, and their union does not result in a mixture or confusion of the two.

• **The Pelagian Controversy**

§306 The Pelagian controversy provided the occasion for another doctrinal issue that has affected major doctrinal stands for centuries down to today since Augustine "responded" to it.

A standard definition

- Pelagianism asserts that **human beings are born morally neutral**, possessing the ability to choose between good and evil. There is **no inherent original sin inherited from Adam**, and **human nature is not fundamentally corrupted by the Fall**. They reject the idea that Adam's sin affected all of humanity, leading to a state of spiritual and moral corruption.
- Pelagians emphasize human free will to such an extent that **they believe individuals can choose to live sinlessly by their own moral effort**. They reject the notion that human will is enslaved by sin or requires divine grace for moral transformation.
- **Pelagianism minimizes the role of divine grace in salvation**. While acknowledging that God provides moral instruction and examples through Jesus, **Pelagians argue that individuals can achieve salvation through their own righteous living and moral choices**.
- Pelagianism teaches that **salvation is attainable through human moral effort, without absolute dependence on divine grace**. This stands in contrast to the traditional Christian belief that salvation is a gift of God's grace, received through faith in Christ.

- Pelagianism **downplays the necessity of infant baptism for the remission of sin, as there is no belief in original sin** that requires such cleansing.

§307 As bad as many of these teachings sound, there are problems that arise.

- Pelagius never said these things in any extant writing of his.
- The idea of original sin in this context became defined in a way that was never used before.
- "Without absolute dependence on divine grace" to Augustine suggests that exercising any free will at all in salvation is a denial of God's grace.
- Justifying infant baptism became the catalyst for creating a new set of doctrines for salvation.

Free will was the consistent doctrine before Augustine

§308 Prior to the writings of Augustine, the Church universally held that mankind had a totally free will. Each man was responsible before God to accept the Gospel. His ultimate destiny, while fully dependent on God's grace and power, was also dependent on his free choice to submit to or reject God's grace and power. In the three centuries from the Apostles to Augustine the early Church held to NONE of the five points of Calvinism, not one. The writings of the orthodox Church, for the first three centuries, are in stark contrast to the ideas of Augustine and Calvin. Man is fully responsible for his choice to respond to or reject the Gospel. This was considered to be the Apostolic doctrine passed down through the local church elders ordained by the Apostles, and their successors. These statements from theologians of the time period are all worth reading, but the writing of Justin Martyr is exemplary.

- Clement of Rome (30-100 AD) ...Lot's wife, who went forth with him, being of a different mind from himself and not continuing in agreement with him [as to the command which had been given them], was made an example of, so as to be a pillar of salt unto this day. This was done that all might know that those who are of a double mind, and who distrust the power of God, bring down judgment on themselves? and become a sign to all succeeding generations." (Clement, Epistle to the Corinthians, XI)
- Ignatius (30-107 AD) "Seeing, then, all things have an end, and there is set before us life upon our observance [of God's precepts], but death as the result of disobedience, and every one, according to the choice he makes, shall go to his own place, let us flee from death, and make choice of life..."(Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, V)
- Barnabas (100 AD) "The Lord will judge the world without respect of persons. Each will receive as he has done: if he is righteous, his righteousness will precede him; if he is wicked, the reward of wickedness is before him. " (Epistle of Barnabas, IV)
- Justin Martyr (110-165 AD) "**But lest some suppose, from what has been said by us, that we say that whatever happens, happens by a fatal necessity, because it is foretold as known beforehand, this too we explain...For if it be fated that this man, e.g., be good, and this other evil, neither is the former meritorious nor the latter to be blamed. And again, unless the human race have the power**

of avoiding evil and choosing good by free choice, they are not accountable for their actions, of whatever kind they be. But that it is by free choice they both walk uprightly and stumble, we thus demonstrate...But this we assert is inevitable fate, that they who choose the good have worthy rewards, and they who choose the opposite have their merited awards. For not like other things, as trees and quadrupeds, which cannot act by choice, did God make man: for neither would he be worthy of reward or praise did he not of himself choose the good, but were created for this end; nor, if he were evil, would he be worthy of punishment, not being evil of himself, but being able to be nothing else than what he was made." (Justin, First Apology, XLIII)

"...But neither do we affirm that it is by fate that men do what they do, or suffer what they suffer, but that each man by free choice acts rightly or sins; and that it is by the influence of the wicked demons that earnest men...suffer persecution and are in bonds, while [others]...seem to be blessed in abundance and glory. The Stoics, not observing this, maintained that all things take place according to the necessity of fate. But since God in the beginning made the race of angels and men with free-will, they will justly suffer in eternal fire the punishment of whatever sins they have committed. And this is the nature of all that is made, to be capable of vice and virtue. For neither would any of them be praiseworthy unless there were power to turn to both (virtue and vice)..." (Justin Second Apology, VII)

"Could not God have cut off in the beginning the serpent, so that he exist not, rather than have said, 'And I will put enmity between him and the woman, and between his seed and her seed?' Could He not have at once created a multitude of men? But yet, since He knew that it would be good, **He created both angels and men free to do that which is righteous, and He appointed periods of time during which He knew it would be good for them to have the exercise of free-will; and because He likewise knew it would be good, He made general and particular judgments; each one's freedom of will, however, being guarded.**" (Justin, Dialogue with Trypho, 102)

- Irenaeus (120-202 AD) "This expression [of our Lord], "How often would I have gathered thy children together, and thou wouldest not," set forth the ancient law of human liberty, because God made man a free [agent] from the beginning, possessing his own power, even as he does his own soul, to obey the behests (ad utendum sententia) of God voluntarily, and not by compulsion of God. For there is no coercion with God, but a good will [towards us] is present with Him continually. And therefore does He give good counsel to all. And in man, as well as in angels, He has placed the power of choice (for angels are rational beings), so that those who had yielded obedience might justly possess what is good, given indeed by God, but preserved by themselves. On the other hand, they who have not obeyed shall, with justice, be not found in possession of the good, and shall receive condign punishment:...God therefore has given that which is good, as the apostle tells us in this Epistle, and they who work it shall receive glory and honor, because they have done that which is good when they had it in their power not to do it; but those who do it not shall receive the just judgment of God, because they did not work good when they had it in their power so to do.

"But if some had been made by nature bad, and others good, these latter would

not be deserving of praise for being good, for such were they created; nor would the former be reprehensible, for thus they were made [originally]. But since all men are of the same nature, able both to hold fast and to do what is good; and, on the other hand, having also the power to cast it from them and not to do it, — some do justly receive praise even among men who are under the control of good laws (and much more from God), and obtain deserved testimony of their choice of good in general, and of persevering therein; but the others are blamed, and receive a just condemnation, because of their rejection of what is fair and good. And therefore the prophets used to exhort men to what was good, to act justly and to work righteousness, as I have so largely demonstrated, because it is in our power so to do, and because by excessive negligence we might become forgetful, and thus stand in need of that good counsel which the good God has given us to know by means of the prophets. ... No doubt, if any one is unwilling to follow the Gospel itself, it is in his power [to reject it], but it is not expedient. For it is in man's power to disobey God, and to forfeit what is good; but [such conduct] brings no small amount of injury and mischief. ... But because man is possessed of free will from the beginning, and God is possessed of free will, in whose likeness man was created, advice is always given to him to keep fast the good, which thing is done by means of obedience to God... (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, Bk. IV, 37)

(The above passage is immediately followed by Irenaeus' refutation of the Gnostic cults who "maintain the opposite to these conclusions.")

- Tatian (110-172 AD) "...We were not created to die, but we die by our own fault. Our free-will has destroyed us; we who were free have become slaves; we have been sold through sin. Nothing evil has been created by God; we ourselves have manifested wickedness; but we, who have manifested it, are able again to reject it." (Tatian, *Address to the Greeks*, XI)
- Tertullian (AD 145-220) "...In order, therefore, that man might have a goodness of his own, bestowed on him by God, and there might be henceforth in man a property, and in a certain sense a natural attribute of goodness, there was assigned to him in the constitution of his nature, as a formal witness of the goodness which God bestowed upon him, freedom and power of the will, such as should cause good to be performed spontaneously by man, as a property of his own, on the ground that no less than this would be required in the matter of a goodness which was to be voluntarily exercised by him, that is to say, by the liberty of his will, without either favor or servility to the constitution of his nature, so that man should be good just up to this point, if he should display his goodness in accordance with his natural constitution indeed, but still as the result of his will, as a property of his nature; and, by a similar exercise of volition, should show himself to be too strong in defense against evil also (for even this God, of course, foresaw), being free, and master of himself; because, if he were wanting in this prerogative of self-mastery, so as to perform even good by necessity and not will, he would, in the helplessness of his servitude, become subject to the usurpation of evil, a slave as much to evil as to good. Entire freedom of will, therefore, was conferred upon him in both tendencies; so that, as master of himself, he might constantly encounter good by spontaneous observance of it, and evil by its spontaneous avoidance; because, were man even otherwise circumstanced, it was yet his bounden duty, in the judgment of God, to do justice according to the motions of his will regarded, of course, as free..."

(Tertullian, Against Marcion, Bk. II, ch. vi)

"God put the question [to Adam – "where art thou"] with an appearance of uncertainty, in order that even here He might prove man to be the subject of a free will in the alternative of either a denial or a confession, and give to him the opportunity of freely acknowledging his transgression, and, so far, of lightening it. In like manner He inquires of Cain where his brother was, just as if He had not yet heard the blood of Abel crying from the ground, in order that he too might have the opportunity from the same power of the will of spontaneously denying, and to this degree aggravating, his crime; and that thus there might be supplied to us examples of confessing sins rather than of denying them: so that even then was initiated the evangelic doctrine, "By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned." (Tertullian, Against Marcion, Bk. II, xxv)

- Origen (185-254 AD) "This also is clearly defined in the teaching of the Church, that every rational soul is possessed of free-will and volition; that it has a struggle to maintain with the devil and his angels, and opposing influences, because they strive to burden it with sins; but if we live rightly and wisely, we should endeavor to shake ourselves free of a burden of that kind. From which it follows, also, that we understand ourselves not to be subject to necessity, so as to be compelled by all means, even against our will, to do either good or evil. For if we are our own masters, some influences perhaps may impel us to sin, and others help us to salvation; we are not forced, however, by any necessity either to act rightly or wrongly, which those persons think is the case who say that the courses and movements of the stars are the cause of human actions, not only of those which take place beyond the influence of the freedom of the will, but also of those which are placed within our own power." (Origen, De Principis, Preface)
- Hippolytus (170-236 AD) "But man, from the fact of his possessing a capacity of self-determination, brings forth what is evil, that is, accidentally; which evil is not consummated except you actually commit some piece of wickedness. For it is in regard of our desiring anything that is wicked, or our meditating upon it, that what is evil is so denominated. Evil had no existence from the beginning, but came into being subsequently. Since man has free will, a law has been defined for his guidance by the Deity, not without answering a good purpose. For if man did not possess the power to will and not to will, why should a law be established? For a law will not be laid down for an animal devoid of reason, but a bridle and a whip; whereas to man has been given a precept and penalty to perform, or for not carrying into execution what has been enjoined. For man thus constituted has a law been enacted by just men in primitive ages." (Hippolytus, Against all Heresies, Bk. X, ch. xxix)
- Novatian (210-280 AD) "And lest, again, an unbounded freedom should fall into peril, He laid down a command, in which man was taught that there was no evil in the fruit of the tree; but he was forewarned that evil would arise if perchance he should exercise his free will, in the contempt of the law that was given. For, on the one hand, it had behooved him to be free, lest the image of God should, unfittingly be in bondage; and on the other, the law was to be added, so that an unbridled liberty might not break forth even to a contempt of the Giver..." (Novatian, Trinity, ch. I)
- Archelaus (277 AD) "This account also indicates that rational creatures have been entrusted with free-will, in virtue of which they also admit of conversions." ... "For

all the creatures that God made, He made very good; and He gave to every individual the sense of free-will, in accordance with which standard He also instituted the law of judgment. To sin is ours, and that we sin not is God's gift, as our will is constituted to choose either to sin or not to sin. . . . The judges said: He has given demonstration enough of the origin of the devil. And as both sides admit that there will be a judgment, it is necessarily involved in that admission that every individual is shown to have free-will; and since this is brought clearly out, there can be no doubt that every individual, in the exercise of his own proper power of will, may shape his course in whatever direction he pleases." (Archelaus, *The Acts of the Disputation*)

- Alexander of Alexandria (273-326 AD) "I will endeavor, with your assistance and favor, to examine carefully the position of those who are offended, and deny that we speak the truth, when we say that man is possessed of free-will, and prove that "They perish self-destroyed, By their own fault," choosing the pleasant in preference to the expedient." (Alexander, *Banquet of the Ten Virgins*, Discourse VIII, ch. xii)
- Lactantius (260-330 AD) "When, therefore, the number of men had begun to increase, God in His forethought, lest the devil, to whom from the beginning He had given power over the earth, should by his subtilty either corrupt or destroy men, as he had done at first, sent angels for the protection and improvement of the human race; and inasmuch as He had given these a free will, He enjoined them above all things not to defile themselves with contamination from the earth, and thus lose the dignity of their heavenly nature."(Lactantius, *Divine Institutes*, Bk. II, ch. xv)

The complete quotes and the article in which they appear is available at:
soteriology101.com/2014/12/16/did-the-early-church-fathers-teach-calvinistic-doctrine/

Infant baptism, the catalyst

§309 A popular explanation of the Pelagian controversy suggests that infant baptism was a side issue that was incorporated in Augustine's arguments against Pelagius. However, Augustine's defense of infant baptism was a very significant concern to him. Historian Philip Schaff⁷ brings to the forefront the effect of Augustine's concern over infant baptism in what motivated him.

§310 While busy over the Donatist controversy (p. 121) at the Council of Carthage (411 AD), Augustine did not have an opportunity to meet with Pelagius but was bothered by a casual remark he heard from Pelagius about infant baptism, "that infants were not baptized for remission of sins, but for consecration to Christ." He permitted the issue to be overlooked, "because there was no opportunity to contradict it, and those who said it were not such men as could cause him [any concern] for their influence."

§311 In his sermons Augustine emphasized "that the universal sin of the world and its helplessness in sin constituted...the necessity of Christ's grace for salvation [and] was just as great for infants as for adults."

§312 In Sermon 175, Augustine argued that the only reason parents would bring infants to be baptized is if infants are guilty of Adam's sin. This is a departure from the

⁷Schaff is notable because he defends Augustine and holds that the fault of the controversy resides entirely on Pelagius.

concept of infants born inheriting Adam's corruption of sin. It imputes Adam's guilt to a child. He argued that sponsors could speak for infants and make a profession for them so that they could be baptized. He said "Let parents choose one of two things: let them either confess that there is sin to be healed in their infants, or let them cease bringing them to the physician." The right choice would be to stop bringing infants to be baptized, but he argued for baptism instead. His argument was backwards. If infants are to be baptized then he believed that that proves they are guilty sinners because baptism is only used for sinners as part of their salvation. "They are infants, but they are made members of Him. They are infants, but they receive His sacraments. They are infants, but they become partakers of His table, so that they may have life."
(based on Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers - St. Augustine: Anti-Pelagian Writings, Schaff, 25-29)

§313 Augustine's teaching was that God, in His sovereign will and mysterious providence, chooses to bestow the grace of baptism upon some infants, granting them the opportunity for salvation, while others, not chosen in this way, remain in a state of original sin. This divine predestination is a reflection of God's inscrutable wisdom and mercy, and it is not based on any merit or foreseen actions of the infants themselves. This became part of his proof of predestination. The only reason that some infants died without saving baptism while others received it, according to Augustine, is that some were predestined to salvation while others were not.

Augustine's confusion of inherited guilt

§314 Augustine changed the doctrine of original sin to original guilt and suggested that anyone who denies original guilt must be denying original sin. It has been suggested that part of the problem is that Augustine was using a faulty Latin translation of Romans 5:12 that reads, as in the RC Douay Rheims:

Wherefore as by one man sin entered into this world, and by sin death; and so death passed upon all men, **in whom** all have sinned.

Virtually every other translation is consistent with the Greek conjunction *for that* or *because*:

Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, **for that** all have sinned:

§315 This points out why theologians pay attention to Bible versions and minute changes. Augustine used the Latin to build an entire theology of the sin nature in infants. This then led to Augustine exaggerating the scope of God's grace and the idea that God must override the sinful nature ignoring man's will in the matter, a Manichaean error (p. 102). Pelagius' writings reflect the idea that man is dead because of Adam. He consistently wrote in terms of the God's grace for living the Christian life.

Whosoever makes a right use of this [freedom of the will] does so entirely surrender himself to God, and does so completely mortify his own will, that he is able to say with the apostle, 'Nevertheless it is already of I that live, but Christ liveth in me;' and 'He placeth his heart in the hand of God, so that He turneth it whithersoever He willeth.'

That we are *able* to do good is of God, but that we *actually do it* is of ourselves.

That we are *able* to make a good use of speech comes from God; but that *we do actually make this good use of speech* proceeds from ourselves.

That we are *able* to think a good thought comes from God, but that *we actually think a good thought* proceeds from ourselves."

§316 Augustine appears to have misunderstood Pelagius who dealt with the grace of God in *sanctification* and assumed that Pelagius didn't believe in the grace of God in *salvation*.

Clearing Pelagius

§317 Pelagius was found innocent of heresy on a number of occasions. It was the controversy created over teachings attributed to him and sparked perhaps by some who were associated with him that led to the ultimate condemnation of his supposed teachings.

Augustine's opportunity

§318 Augustine took advantage of Pelagius' translations of the Greek church fathers that reflected free will to accuse him on 14 points of an anti-grace position. However, there were problems with Augustine's accusations.

- None of the 14 points actually appear in any writing of Pelagius.
- Pelagius consistently wrote about free will to eliminate arguments by people that they couldn't avoid the excesses of sin. Augustine actually appreciated this about Pelagius...at first.

It was inevitable, therefore, that although he was rejoiced when he heard, some years later, of the zealous labours of this pious monk in Rome towards stemming the tide of luxury and sin, and esteemed him for his devout life, and loved him for his Christian activity, he yet was deeply troubled when subsequent rumours reached him that he was "disputing against the grace of God." He tells us over and over again, that this was a thing no pious heart could endure; and we perceive that, from this moment, Augustin was only biding his time, and awaiting a fitting opportunity to join issue with the denier of the Holy of holies of his whole, I will not say theology merely, but life. "Although I was grieved by this," he says, "and it was told me by men whom I believed, I yet desired to have something of such sort from his own lips or in some book of his, so that, if I began to refute it, he would not be able to deny it." (Schaff p. 25)

- The social situation of the day was concerned with the power of God. Attributing agency to man appeared as an arrogant claim to man's ability.
- By setting up a straw man argument against Pelagius, Augustine was able to criticize what had been orthodox teaching on free will and introduce his new theology as if it were the remedy.
- Augustine resorted to Manichaen and Stoic fatalism (p. ? and 102) to justify:
A new version of original sin where men are guilty because of Adam's sin, not just corrupted.
Absolute prevenient grace, known today as Monergism where God acts on men because man has no ability to respond and only God is at work vs.

synergism where God calls and man responds and submits himself to God for salvation.

Predestination – in the spirit of magnifying the power of God, His sovereignty is mingled with His grace which becomes absolute, disregarding the will of man, so that God has determined fatalistically who shall be saved. This *effectively* damns all others to Hell.

§319 It will not be until the Renaissance nearly 1000 years later in the 1400s that the free will work of the believer will become truly appreciated again as opposed to a dictatorial and tyrannical control by a church that claims to represent the absolute sovereignty of God.

§320 For a complete discussion on this, please review Leighton Flowers' interview of Ali Bonner on *Was Pelagius a Pelagian?* at [youtube.com/watch?v=gAMAYi1cjZw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gAMAYi1cjZw)

3. Challenges of the Age

§321 The source of the challenges faced in the Pergamos church age will no longer be from the political world without, but the political world within. There will also be religious pressure from without as the church is faced with an influx of paganism.

• Bibliology

Canon

§322 The Councils of Hippo (393 AD) and Carthage (397 AD) are often considered among the earliest instances where the specific list of books that make up the New Testament canon was officially confirmed. The councils were attended by bishops from various regions to address various theological and disciplinary matters within the church. While the canon of the New Testament had been recognized and accepted in many Christian communities prior to these councils, these councils helped to provide official affirmation and clarity regarding which books should be considered authoritative and part of the sacred scriptures. There were debates about a few books but the New Testament canon was widely accepted. It's important to note that these councils did not "create" the canon but rather recognized and confirmed the existing consensus within the church regarding the authoritative writings.

Hermeneutics

§323 The allegorical method for interpreting the Scriptures now became dominant. The Scriptures were revered, but the allegorical method could easily render them irrelevant.

§324 Augustine emphasized the importance of Scripture, but when there were things that did seem to defy sensibility, he used the allegorical method which would end up accommodating personal interpretation. He also appealed to tradition which could allow further compromise of Biblical meaning.

In Book II, Chapter 9 of "On Christian Doctrine," Augustine discusses the role of

authority in interpreting Scripture. He emphasizes that there are certain essential matters of faith and moral conduct that are plainly presented in Scripture and are necessary for salvation. He advises interpreters to adhere to the teachings of the Church and the consensus of Christian tradition:

"In those matters that are not transacted in figures or types and that are plainly laid down in words, the authority of a few manuscripts may be a help in understanding them; but if these manuscripts clash with the authoritative decisions or established customs or the transacted faith of the universal Church, we must prefer the soundness of the latter and yield submission."

§325 In this passage, Augustine acknowledges the role of manuscripts in understanding certain matters in Scripture. However, he also emphasized that if a particular interpretation derived from manuscripts contradicts the established faith and practices of the universal Church, then the interpretation should be rejected in favor of the authoritative decisions of the Church and its tradition.

§326 Augustine depended on allegory and tradition to inform his arguments (see *Bibliology-Hermeneutics*, p. 132), but his selection of which tradition to recognize favored support of the Catholic church on Communion (short of transubstantiation), the universal church, and baptism for removing original sin (p. 135. 136)

• Theology Proper

The Council of Nicaea (325 AD) is generally considered one of the most important and authoritative councils for defining the orthodox understanding of the Trinity. The primary focus of the Council of Nicaea was addressing the Arian controversy, which revolved around the divinity of Christ and his relationship to God the Father within the context of the Trinity.

At the Council of Nicaea, the Nicene Creed was formulated, which affirmed the orthodox Christian belief in the consubstantiality (one substance) of the Son with the Father. This Creed emphasized that the Son is of the same substance or essence as the Father, thus affirming his full divinity.

The Nicene Creed laid the foundation for the Trinitarian theology that has been accepted by the majority of Christian traditions, including Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and many Protestant denominations. It played a pivotal role in solidifying the understanding of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as distinct persons within the one Godhead.

• Pneumatology

The First Council of Constantinople (381 AD) further clarified the divinity of the Holy Spirit and expanded upon the Nicene Creed.

• Christology

There were many views of Christ that were being debated during this time that included such issues as:

<p>Adoptionism: - Jesus became the Son of God</p> <p>Apollinarism: Christ had a human body and a divine mind, but no soul</p> <p>Eutychianism: Christ's divine nature fully absorbed his human nature, resulting in a single, mixed nature.</p> <p>Chalcedonism (Neo): Christ's two distinct natures (divine and human) united in one person.</p> <p>Docetism: Christ's physical body was illusory</p> <p>Dyoenergism vs. Monoenergism: Christ had two distinct energies (willful</p>	<p>actions), one divine and one human vs. a single divine energy and will.</p> <p>Dyothelitism vs. Monothelitism: Christ had two wills, divine and human vs. a single will</p> <p>Dyophysitism vs. Monophysitism: Christ had two distinct natures (divine and human) vs. a single, united nature after the Incarnation.</p> <p>Miaphysitism: emphasizes the inseparable union of Christ's divinity and humanity in a single nature.</p> <p>Homoousionism vs. Homoiousianism: the Son is of the same essence as the</p>	<p>Father (Nicene Creed) vs. a similar essence but not identical.</p> <p>Homoianism: emphasized similarity but not identity in substance between the Father and the Son, associated with the Arian controversy.</p> <p>Nestorianism: a division between the divine and human natures of Christ, implying that there were two distinct persons.</p> <p>Theopaschism: God, particularly the Son, suffered in the incarnation</p>
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§327 These theological definitions were hotly debated, but are beyond the scope of our discussion.

§328 The issue about the nature of Christ was clarified further in the Council of Chalcedon (451 AD). Although councils by themselves do not establish doctrine, the debates that led to them forced them to reckon with understanding the Scriptures and articulate their position. The view of the Trinity was clearly taught at the council of Nicaea and the doctrine of Christ defined at the Council of Chalcedon has become a cornerstone of orthodox Christian Christology. It is accepted by Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and many Protestant traditions as a fundamental statement on the nature of Christ.

The Chalcedonian Definition, formulated during the council, affirmed that Christ had two distinct natures—fully divine and fully human—united in one person, without confusion, change, division, or separation. This definition sought to provide a balanced theological framework that emphasized the unity of Christ's person while preserving the integrity of both his divine and human natures.

• Anthropology

§329 Augustine injected the Manichaean concept (see p. 102) that man has no ability to respond to God, which would require that God save him without any regard of choice.

• Harmartiology

§330 Augustine introduced the concept of the original *guilt* of Adam being inherited by man, not just the corruption of sin.

• Soteriology

§331 Augustine introduced the concept of predestination and election based on infant baptism.

His reasoning started with church tradition then logically progressed in this manner:

- 1.) The church baptizes infants.
- 2.) Water baptism is for forgiveness of sin and reception of the Holy Spirit.
- 3.) Some dying infants are rushed by their Christian parents to the bishop for baptism but die before this can occur, while other infants born of prostitutes are abandoned on the streets when a church virgin rushes them to the bishop who baptizes

them.

4.) These infants have no control over whether or not they are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit to become Christians.

5.) Therefore, God must unilaterally and unconditionally predetermine which infants are damned and which are justified. Augustine eventually taught even when "ministers prepared for giving baptism to the infants, it still is not given, because God does not choose" (*Perseverance* 31). Therefore, logically, God's election must be unconditional since infants have no personal sin, no merit, no good works, and no choice. (Wilson, 48)

• Ecclesiology

Autonomy

§332 The struggle by the Donatists to resist the authority of the "mainline" churches had first been seen with the Novationists (see p. 103). This same issue will replay throughout church history.

Baptism confused with circumcision

§333 In this time period, baptism had come to take on a new character. Baptism was considered to be essential to salvation. Augustine used the argument for the thief on the cross, who was unbaptized, that he *must* have been at some time in his life or else Jesus would not have said that he would be with Him in paradise that very day.

§334 Infant baptism had become widespread. It came to be analogous to circumcision.

§335 Tertullian, an early Christian theologian of the 2nd and 3rd centuries, in "On Baptism," drew parallels between baptism and circumcision, highlighting the spiritual significance and continuity between the two rites.

"In the sacrament of baptism, indeed, when the ungodly are dipped into the water, the waters embrace their sins which are doomed to darkness, and forthwith reject them, while the innocent, as the Lord has expressed it, come forth 'alive' from the sepulchre of the water as from a mother's womb, new-born by their renunciation of the world, and by their union with the Lord."

§336 Tertullian was correctly identifying the water-birth of John 3 as natural birth. But the parallelism of circumcision and baptism only fits if it is applied to people who are of age to make the decision to be saved. First-birth/water-birth/flesh-birth would certainly be associated with circumcision for *children* for *fleshly* identification. Second-birth/spirit-birth/spirit-birth would apply only to *people of age* for *spiritual* identification. If you make baptism a sacrament that saves, then age is irrelevant. By making baptism a *means* of salvation instead of a *sign* of salvation, then *circumcision* of children was turned into the *salvation* of children by baptism. It was no longer a sign of belief but a sacrament of salvation.

§337 Augustine (354-430), in his work *On the Creed*, explained the relationship between circumcision and baptism, stating that baptism replaced circumcision as the sign of the covenant in the new dispensation and provided salvation.

"The sacrament of baptism, whether conferred by Jews or by Gentiles, is one; nor is it of any consequence that the Jew performs it with a knife, while the Gentile

performs it with the naked hand. For neither does this make any difference in the virtue of the sacrament, nor in that holiness which procures the remission of sins."

§338 Gregory of Nyssa (335-395 AD): "In the Old Covenant, circumcision was the sacrament of the confession of faith, while in the New Covenant, baptism takes its place." (The Great Catechism)

§339 Separatist groups that continued from the previous church age did not practice infant baptism. This included Montanists (p. 100), Novationists (p. 103), and groups that were just beginning such as Donatists (p. 122), and Arians (p. 122). Later, Pelagian (p. 124) churches did not use infant baptism.

See more about the confusion of baptism with circumcision on p. 208.

Communion

§340 Notice the difference in the simple way communion is described by Justin Martyr in his First Apology (155 AD) and the how the Roman influence came to bear in Cyril's description (350 AD)

Communion service according to Justin Martyr 155 AD

But we, after we have thus washed him who has been convinced and has assented to our teaching, bring him to the place where those who are called brethren are assembled, in order that we may offer hearty prayers in common for ourselves and for the baptized [illuminated] person, and for all others in every place, that we may be counted worthy, now that we have learned the truth, by our works also to be found good citizens and keepers of the commandments, so that we may be saved with an everlasting salvation. Having ended the prayers, we salute one another with a kiss. There is then brought to the president of the brethren bread and a cup of wine mixed with water; and he taking them, gives praise and glory to the Father of the universe, through the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, and offers thanks at considerable length for our being counted worthy to receive these things at His hands. And when he has concluded the prayers and thanksgivings, all the people present express their assent by saying Amen. This word Amen answers in the Hebrew language to *yévoito* [so be it]. And when the president has given thanks, and all the people have expressed their assent, those who are called by us deacons give to each of those present to partake of the bread and wine mixed with water over which the thanksgiving was pronounced, and to those who are absent they carry away a portion.

Communion service according to Cyril by 350 AD

§341 In his apology for communion as the body and blood of Christ, Cyril partially quotes passages from Corinthians 11 and John 6 leaving out any reference to the Lord giving communion as a memorial or is that the flesh profiteth nothing. (Lecture XXII. On the Body and Blood of Christ.) He wrote his Catechetical Lectures around 350 AD.

Lecture XXIII. (On the Mysteries. V.) On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion 1
Pet.2:1 *Wherefore putting away all filthiness, and all guile, and evil speaking &c.*

1. By the loving-kindness of God ye have heard sufficiently at our former meetings concerning Baptism, and Chrism, and partaking of the Body and Blood of Christ; and

now it is necessary to pass on to what is next in order, meaning to-day to set the crown on the spiritual building of your edification.

2. Ye have seen then the Deacon who gives to the Priest water to wash and to the Presbyters who stand round God's altar. He gave it not at all because of bodily defilement; it is not that; for we did not enter the Church at first with defiled bodies. But the washing of hands is a symbol that ye ought to be pure from all sinful and unlawful deeds; for since the hands are a symbol of action, by washing them, it is evident, we represent the purity and blamelessness of our conduct.

...

7. Then having sanctified ourselves by these spiritual Hymns, we beseech the merciful God to send forth His Holy Spirit upon the gifts lying before Him; that He may make the Bread the Body of Christ, and the Wine the Blood of Christ for whatsoever the Holy Ghost has touched, is surely sanctified and changed.

8. Then, after the spiritual sacrifice, the bloodless service, is completed, over that sacrifice of propitiation we entreat God for the common peace of the Churches, for the welfare of the world for kings; for soldiers and allies; for the sick; for the afflicted; and, in a word, for all who stand in need of succour we all pray and offer this sacrifice.

9. Then we commemorate also those who have fallen asleep before us, first Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, Martyrs, that at their prayers and intercessions God would receive our petition. Then on behalf also of the Holy Fathers and Bishops who have fallen asleep before us, and in a word of all who in past years have fallen asleep among us, believing that it will be a very great benefit to the souls, for whom the supplication is put up, while that holy and most awful sacrifice is set forth.

(Schaff, *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Series II, Vol. 7)

The State Church

§342 Starting first with the informal power of endorsement of the state, the Church is now recognized as universal because Christianity is the official religion as sanctioned by the state. Before, the church was in the world, now the world was in the church. Many came to the church not to have a standing *separate* from the world, but to have standing *in* the world. With them came a host of Roman pagan concepts including:

- Perversion of Christian charity into indiscriminate almsgiving, with the idea that almsgiving secured the remission of sins.
- Perversion of the ordinances into magical mysteries whereby spiritual benefits are obtained.
- The idea of the sanctity and the spiritual potency of water, the element of baptism, of holy places, of the bones and other relics of saints and martyrs, of the cross and the sign of the cross, of the sepulchre of Christ.
- Ritualism – pompous ceremonial to satisfy the desire to propitiate Deity by external performances.
- The hierarchical spirit was active. The same tendencies and circumstances that raised the *bishops* above the presbyters, raised presbyters, as being entrusted with the ordinances, far above deacons and laymen. *Presbyters* continued to be the advisers of the bishops, and from their number bishops were usually chosen.
- Sacerdotalism, common to all pagan religions, where the ordinances possessing magical efficacy must be administered by a properly qualified priest. The priest, by reason of his ceremonial consecration, a mediator between God and man, the

- channel through which alone the ordinary believer can secure spiritual benefits
- Under various influences: that of paganism, with its mysterious rites, especially those of the widely prevalent Mithras worship; that of Gnosticism, which itself imitated the Orphic, Eleusinian, and Pythagorean mysteries; that of being long obliged to worship secretly; and the growth of sacerdotalism with which ritualism always goes hand in hand, Christianity, by the close of this period, had ceased to worship and perform its ordinances in the free and simple way represented in the New Testament and in the "Apology" of Justin Martyr.
 - From the middle of the second century onward the Lord's Prayer seems to have been generally employed in the churches in a liturgical way. Gradually other forms were added, and by the close of this period some what elaborate forms of prayer and praise, with full directions for the solemn administration of the ordinances, had been introduced.
 - While celibacy of the clergy was not insisted upon, a strong effort was being made to prevent those that came into the clergy unmarried, from marrying. This feeling was promoted by the Gnostic or Manichaeic idea of the inherent evil of the sexual relations.
 - When pagans of wealth and influence entered the churches in large numbers, especially when they became bishops, as was often the case, it was perfectly natural that the churches should be made to conform to a great extent to pagan temples; should be filled with images; should introduce saint-worship in the place of polytheism, etc.

• Eschatology

§343 Following Christianity's unexpected triumph in the Roman Empire, even finding favor with the Caesars themselves, the once-anticipated millennial reign underwent a transformation in perception. This transformation led to it being dated either from the initial appearance of Christ or from Constantine's conversion and the decline of paganism. Consequently, it began to be seen as fulfilled in the splendor of the prevailing imperial state church.

§344 Augustine, who had once nurtured chiliastic aspirations himself, introduced a novel theory that mirrored this societal shift and gained widespread acceptance. In his interpretation, the apocalyptic millennium was redefined as the *present* rule of Christ within the Catholic Church. The concept of the first resurrection now represented the translation of martyrs and saints to heaven, where they actively partook in Christ's dominion. This perspective naturally gave rise to the belief that as the first millennium of the Christian era neared its conclusion, a widespread anticipation spread across Western Europe that the final judgment was imminent.

§345 As the eras of Constantine and Augustine unfolded, chiliasm found itself branded as a heretical belief, losing its standing. Even later, during the era of the Protestant Reformation, it was dismissed by reformers as nothing more than a fanciful notion rooted in Jewish tradition.

(Adapted from Schaff, *History of the Church*, §158 Chiliasm)

VI. THYATIRA 450-1500

THE TOLERANT CHURCH

(MYSTERY RELIGIONS ACCOMMODATED)

Rev 2:18-26 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

19I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the last *to be* more than the first.

20Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.

21And I gave her space to repent of her fornication; and she repented not.

22Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

23And I will kill her children with death; and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

24But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, as many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

25But that which ye have *already* hold fast till I come.

26And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

§346 The Thyatira age of the church is the church entrenched in the Romanized world. All those who live in relationship with this church will come under its Jezebel seduction. The end of the age will experience much tribulation. There is a blessing for those who resist the Satanic influence. While not perfect, at least they will have been faithful in their service.

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Thyatira

§347 The date of the beginning of this age is due to a conjunction of events about 450 AD. It is marked by the beginning of Leo the Great's papacy (Leo I) as he claims spiritual primacy over all the other Sees (seats).⁸ The Fall of the Western Roman Empire in 476 AD gave rise to the opportunity for papal influence and growth in power. The firm establishment of papal power dominated the Medieval, or Middle Ages. The end of the age was characterized by the elevation of the papacy to its highest level of power only to fulfill its corruption followed by its great loss of power.

§348 The end of the age is associated the Renaissance (p. 158) setting the stage for the Protestant Reformation. There were notable times that strongly pushed for the Reformation to happen such as the *Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (p. 153) in the

⁸An alternate date would be around 600 AD when Gregory the Great (Gregory I) became heavily involved in secular concerns.

1300s when the power of the papacy was greatly broken, the Renaissance (p. 158) in the 1400s which led to a revival of learning over rigid dogma, and the fall of the Eastern Roman Empire in 1453 which marks the end of the Middle Ages.

§349 One of the interesting things about this age is its end. It met with a collapse as all power-centric systems do. In spite of orthodox conformity being a hallmark of such power systems, the intellectual/philosophical *method* was pitted against *orthodoxy*. Usually the intellectual/philosophical is in contest against the emotional/*mystical*. In this case it was in contest with the emotional/*philosophical*, or a willful adherence to a rigid and petrified orthodoxy! This resulted in the Scholastic method (discussed on p. 156), which in turn became burdensome. Intellectual inquiry was able to blossom in the Renaissance (discussed on p. 158) which did more to usher in the next age that will be characterized by philosophical and theological criticism.

2. Character of the Age

§350 The chief characteristic of this Medieval age is the power dynamics of the centralized church up until the Renaissance (see Conflict of the Kingdoms, p. 6). There were always separatist sects, which will be noted below (see Dissenters, p. 162, 162). Everything that occurred during this age was a long march of gaining power to the loss of power, setting the stage for the Renaissance and the Reformation (this will be repeated often).

• Establishment of papal power - Leo I and Gregory I

§351 Leo I and Gregory I made key advances in papal supremacy, which is different from papal primacy. Primacy suggests the first among equals while supremacy indicates ruling over a united church. Leo focused on the doctrinal and theological aspects of authority, while Gregory emphasized the pastoral and practical dimensions. Leo laid the groundwork for the doctrine, and Gregory further developed it by expanding the papacy's role in *temporal* affairs.

§352 The establishment of papal power under these two popes was a departure from the previous age due to the power void left by the Fall of the Western Roman Empire. They made significant claims that advanced the authority of the pope. Other popes contributed significant developments to papal power as time went on. The pinnacle of papal power would not be reached until The First Vatican Council (1869-1870 AD) which declared papal infallibility when speaking *ex cathedra*, from the throne of Peter.

Leo I 400-461 AD, r. 440-461

§353 Up until the papacy of Leo I, also known as Leo the Great, the universal papacy has been in effect due to the merging of state and church in the Roman Empire in 380 AD.

§354 In 445 AD, Emperor Valentinian III issued a letter known as the "Letter of Valentinian III to Pope Leo I." This was also called the "Valentinian Rescript." In this letter, Valentinian affirmed the authority of Pope Leo I and recognized the primacy of the Bishop of Rome as the successor of Peter.

A clause [had been interpolated in the canons of the Nicene Council] in the interest of the Roman primacy as follows: "Rome has always held the primacy." This interpolation was first used, so far as we know, by the representatives of Leo the Great at the council of Chalcedon (451).

Newman, 264)

§355 The Valentinian Rescript acknowledged the Roman Church's authority in resolving theological disputes and called for the unity and adherence to the decisions made by the pope. It affirmed the *Petrine* doctrine, which held that Saint Peter had been given special authority by Jesus Christ and that the Bishop of Rome, as Peter's successor, held a primacy of jurisdiction over other bishops.

§356 The letter from Emperor Valentinian III to Pope Leo I was significant in solidifying the concept of papal supremacy and reinforcing the influence of the papacy in the Western Roman Empire.

Gregory I , 504-604 AD, r. 590-604 AD

§357 Pope Gregory I, commonly known as Gregory the Great, played a crucial role in unifying Catholicism during his pontificate from 590 to 604 AD. Gregory exerted significant efforts to centralize the authority of the papacy. He asserted the primacy of the Bishop of Rome and emphasized the pope's role as the successor of Saint Peter and the Vicar of Christ. Gregory worked to increase the influence and jurisdiction of the papacy over other bishops and regions, fostering a centralized structure of ecclesiastical governance.

• The Rise of Islam

§358 Islam began in 610 AD with the claim of Mohammed to receive revelation from the angel Gabriel in a cave. Much can be said about the inconsistencies of Islam, but the relationship of Islam to Christianity was political and not theological. The experience of the church was to contain Islam whether through Crusades or be repulsing their expansion.

§359 Charles Martel, also known as Charles the Hammer, was a Frankish military leader who played a crucial role in halting the advance of Islamic forces into Europe during the early Middle Ages. His actions were pivotal in the Battle of Tours (732 CE), which is often seen as a significant moment in European history for stemming the expansion of the Islamic Umayyad Caliphate into Western Europe. While it did not completely stop Islamic incursions into Europe, it significantly slowed down the Umayyad expansion and helped protect Western Europe from further Islamic conquests. The battle is sometimes referred to as the "Battle that Saved Europe" due to its impact on the course of history. His legacy had lasting effects on the political landscape, and his descendants would later play important roles in the Carolingian Dynasty, including his grandson Charlemagne.

§360 Islamic Conquest (711–716 CE): In the early 8th century, Islamic forces from the Umayyad Caliphate in North Africa crossed the Strait of Gibraltar and began the conquest of the Iberian Peninsula. Led by Tariq ibn Ziyad, they defeated the Visigothic king Roderic at the Battle of Guadalete in 711 CE. The Muslims established the Umayyad Emirate of Cordoba, marking the beginning of Islamic rule in Spain.

Beginning in the 8th through the 15th century, Christian kingdoms in the northern part of the Iberian Peninsula initiated a campaign to reclaim territory from Muslim rule. The Nasrid Emirate of Granada, the last Muslim stronghold in Spain, fell to the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II of Aragon and Isabella I of Castile in 1492. It is interesting that the defeat of Islam allowed Ferdinand and Isabella to turn their attention to the expansion international power and Christianity, and the exploration for trade routes by Columbus.

Just another Christian heresy

§361 Islam claims to have been established by an angelic message delivered to Mohammed against the paganism of his day. However, there is reason to believe that it evolved out of heretical Christian influence at that time. The Gnostic influence is evident.

Quran 5:110 "[The Day] when Allah will say, "O Jesus, Son of Mary, remember My favor upon you and upon your mother when I supported you with the Pure Spirit and you spoke to the people in the cradle and in maturity; and [remember] when I taught you writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel; and when you designed from clay [what was] like the form of a bird with My permission, then you breathed into it, and it became a bird with My permission; and you healed the blind and the leper with My permission; and when you brought forth the dead with My permission; and when I restrained the Children of Israel from [killing] you when you came to them with clear proofs and those who disbelieved among them said, "This is not but obvious magic."

The infancy gospel of Thomas contains the exact same story:

And having made soft clay, he fashioned thereof twelve sparrows. And it was the Sabbath when he did these things (or made them). And there were also many other little children playing with him.

Quran 4:157 "That they said (in boast), "We killed Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the Messenger of Allah";- but they killed him not, nor crucified him, but so it was made to appear to them, and those who differ therein are full of doubts, with no (certain) knowledge, but only conjecture to follow, for of a surety they killed him not:- Nay, Allah raised him up unto Himself; and Allah is Exalted in Power, Wise;"

Gnostic Apocalypse of Peter:

He whom you saw on the tree, glad and laughing, this is the living Jesus. But this one into whose hands and feet they drive the nails is his fleshly part, which is the substitute being put to shame, the one who came into being in his likeness. But look at him and me."

There is a third story about Mary shaking a tree for dates, which appears very similarly in the Infancy gospel of James and in the Quran. The stories about Mary's youth parallel the *Protoevangelium of James*. These Gnostic and heretical texts proliferated in the Syriac churches.

Jewish influence

§362 There are also numerous Talmudic legends and Jewish myths (eg. Surah of the Cave) that appear in similar form in the Quran. It is known from the information about him that Muhammad had several religious teachers, including his cousin/relative Waraqah bin Nawfal:

Bukhari 4:55:605 Aisha also said: "The Prophet returned to Khadija while his heart was beating rapidly. She took him to Waraqah bin Naufal who was a Christian convert and used to read the Gospel in Arabic. Waraqah asked (the Prophet), "What do you see?" When he told him, Waraqah said, "That is the same angel whom Allah sent to the Prophet Moses. Should I live till you receive the Divine Message, I will support you strongly."

Mystical influence:

§363 The Desert Fathers and Mothers, Monasteries, Mystical writers, Prophetic Movements, were all part of the spiritual landscape that prepared the people to receive just *another* prophetic claim.

Other Jewish and Christian influence

§364 Early writings in the Koran view Christianity and Judaism favorably. When Mohammed was not well received by those communities, he saw them as infidels to be eliminated.

• The Iconoclasm Controversy 717-843 AD

§365 An icon, in religious terms, typically refers to a work of art, often a painting, with special significance in Eastern Orthodox Christianity and other icon-painting Christian traditions. While icons can take various forms, such as metal castings, stone carvings, or embroidered textiles, they are generally characterized by their flat panel style. This artistic approach differs from the creation of three-dimensional sculptures, which was resisted by Christians for centuries. This resistance was rooted in the belief that pagan sculptures harbored demons and to maintain a clear distinction between Christian and pagan art. To adhere to the commandment against crafting "graven images," Orthodox icons are traditionally limited to three-quarter bas relief. This limitation avoids the creation of statues in the round, which was deemed too reminiscent of pagan religious practices.

§366 The Iconoclasm Controversy (from iconoclast - icon destroyer), gained prominence in the 8th century under Emperor Leo III (717–741 AD). Leo III issued an edict prohibiting the veneration of icons, citing concerns of idolatry and the desire to purify the faith by removing what he saw as pagan influences that had infiltrated churches. This directive led to the removal and destruction of icons from religious spaces and public areas.

§367 Leo III's stance was maintained by subsequent Byzantine⁹ emperors,

⁹Eastern Roman Empire

ushering in an era of iconoclasm that lasted until 787 AD. This period of iconoclastic policies faced opposition from clergy and laypeople who regarded icons as essential to their religious practices. Figures like John of Damascus emerged as advocates for icons, asserting their role as aids in devotion.

§368 The turning point in the controversy came with the convening of the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 AD. Also known as the Seventh Ecumenical Council, this gathering affirmed the legitimacy of icon veneration and condemned iconoclasm as heretical.

§369 Following the Second Council of Nicaea, the use of icons was reinstated in the Eastern Orthodox Church. This era saw the resurgence of iconodules (*icon servants*) and witnessed the revival of iconography in religious art. However, the controversy resurfaced in the 9th century under Emperor Leo V (813–820 AD), leading to another wave of iconoclasm. Not until the reign of Empress Theodora and the Ecumenical Patriarch Methodios I in the mid-9th century were iconoclastic policies once again overturned. Theodora and Methodios actively promoted iconodulism eventually leading to the full restoration of icon veneration with the endorsement of both the Church and the ruling authorities.

§370 In 843 AD, Empress Theodora's efforts culminated in the Feast of Orthodoxy, an event that marked the definitive end of iconoclasm and reaffirmed the official use of icons throughout the Byzantine Empire.

The main problem with imagery in churches is the use of images for the purpose of worship. Their place in a worship setting has been able to be converted to purposes of worship which presents a problem. Although the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches use the word veneration instead of worship, it seems like a semantic issue that describes the same thing.

Exod 20:3-5 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of *any thing* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth:

5Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me;

• The Holy Roman Empire and Charlemagne 800 AD

§371 After the Fall of the Roman Empire in 476 AD the old territories were divided and ruled by various Germanic kingdoms, as well as other regional powers. On December 25, 800, Charlemagne received the blessing of the pope as he was crowned Emperor of the Romans. This was the most distinct beginning of the Holy Roman Empire, but the term *Holy Roman Empire* actually grew to be used over time. Charlemagne's purpose was for...

...the mutual advancement of each his and the pope's interests. He had become seized with the idea of a Holy Roman Empire, working in conjunction with the Holy Catholic Church, each having world-wide dominion, each advancing the interests of the other, each supreme within its own sphere, and both together bringing peace and the blessings of civilization to all mankind...

(Newman 1, 293)

§372 These high ideals never really materialized. If anything, they provided pressure for the *Investiture Controversy* (p. 147), later, over who had the power to invest authority in whom which advanced the power of the papacy further.

The Holy Roman Empire is of interest to the church historian chiefly as the counterpart of the Holy Catholic Church. From the middle of the eleventh century until the middle of the fifteenth century these two powers, that were theoretically the counterpart the one of the other, were for the most part in mortal combat. Emperors deposed popes and procured the election of others in their place. Popes excommunicated emperors and cooperated with rivals in securing changes of dynasty. Each furnished a sort of check upon the other and it is probable that this contest prevented the triumph of ecclesiastical absolutism on the one hand and of imperial absolutism on the other.

(Newman 1, 293-295)

§373 The Holy Roman Empire was formally dissolved after Napoleon declared himself Emperor of the French (1804 AD) and the end of the first Napoleonic war¹⁰ in 1806 AD.

• The Photian Schism 867 AD

§374 As the distribution of power in the East and West continued to develop, the underlying conflict created a missionary conflict in the East.

§375 The *Agreement of 867* or the "Photian Schism," was a notable event in the history of the relationship between the Western and Eastern Churches. The agreement aimed to address issues related to missionary jurisdiction and the autonomy of church activities in the Slavic regions.

§376 In the 9th century, the Byzantine Empire and the Carolingian Empire (the Holy Roman Empire, the western part of the Frankish Kingdom) were both expanding their influence and missionary activities into the Slavic regions of Central and Eastern Europe. Cyril and Methodius, Byzantine brothers and missionaries, were engaged in missionary work among the Slavic peoples, translating religious texts into Slavic languages and developing the Cyrillic alphabet for that purpose. The Archbishop of the Western Church, Adalbert of Magdeburg, accused Cyril and Methodius of infringing upon the jurisdiction of his own diocese and using unauthorized liturgical practices. To resolve the tensions and jurisdictional disputes, Pope Nicholas I and Patriarch Photius of Constantinople engaged in correspondence, resulting in the *Agreement of 867*. This agreement acknowledged the work of Cyril and Methodius among the Slavs and recognized their use of the Slavic language for liturgy and religious texts. The Agreement affirmed the autonomy of the Eastern Church's missionary activities among the Slavs.

This served as another cause for The Great Schism in 1054.

¹⁰The War of the Third Coalition.

• The Great Schism 1054 AD

Mutual excommunication

§377 Constantinople Patriarch Michael I (Michael Cerularius 1000-1059 AD) quarreled with the Roman Pope Leo IX over papal supremacy and other issues between the patriarchies.

§378 Leo based his views, in part, from the *Donation of Constantine*¹¹ that granted the Roman pope "power, and dignity of glory, vigor, and imperial honor," and "supremacy as well over the four principal sees: Alexandria, Antioch, Jerusalem, and Constantinople, as also over all the churches of God in the whole earth." In a letter, he accused Constantinople of historically being a center of heresies and claimed in emphatic terms the primacy of the bishop of Rome over the patriarch of Constantinople. Michael, in his communications, claimed the title "ecumenical [universal] patriarch" and addressed Leo as "brother" rather than "father."

§379 Leo sent a three member legation to deal with Michael, but in the middle of this he died. The legation produced a charter of excommunication against Michael (which was considered to be illegitimate since Leo was dead). Michael, in turn, formed a 21 member synod that excommunicated the members of the legation. Michael closed the Latin churches in his area, which exacerbated the schism.

An extended process

§380 The Great Schism¹² of 1054 AD is recognized as the starting point of division between the Eastern churches and the Western Church. At the time of the Schism, numerous historians of that era, including those from Constantinople¹³, often did not perceive the event as profoundly significant. Even after 1054, harmonious relations endured between the Eastern and Western parts of Christendom. The chasm of separation had not yet taken clear form in their consciousness. The schism persisted as a matter largely unknown to ordinary Christians on both sides. In the years that followed, efforts were undertaken by emperors, popes, and patriarchs to bridge the divide between the churches. Nevertheless, an array of factors and historical occurrences gradually contributed to the widening of the gap between them.

§381 The sacking of Constantinople during the Fourth Crusade in 1204 (p. 149) is thought to have done more to the schism than the events of 1054. The final separation between the Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Churches came only in the 18th century. In 1729, the Roman Church under Pope Benedict XIII prohibited communion with Orthodox Churches, and in 1755, the patriarchs of Alexandria, Jerusalem and Constantinople in retaliation declared the final interruption of sacral communion with

¹¹During the Renaissance, the *Donation of Constantine* was determined to be fraudulent.

¹²The Great Schism is used to refer what are also known as the East-West Schism between the Orthodox churches and the Roman Catholic Church, and the Western Schism between opposing popes later.

¹³Also known as Byzantium, the former name of Constantinople, which is now known as Istanbul. The use of Byzantine Empire was not known to the people of Constantinople or the Eastern Roman Empire. They referred to themselves as Romans. The term was first used by 16th century historians for differentiating between the Eastern and Western Roman Empire.

the Roman Church and declared Catholicism heretical.

A shift of alliances

§382 The popes had depended on an alliance with the Byzantine emperors for support. This schism caused the popes to be more allied with the Normans in France. The French connection will contribute to dissension, schism, and the loss of power in the Roman Church much later. (p. 153)

§383 The Great Schism will contribute to the downfall of the Eastern Roman Empire (also known as the Byzantine Empire) which in turn brought new thinking as refugees came to the West. This became the catalyst for the Renaissance to be followed by the Reformation. (p. 150, 158)

• The Investiture Controversy 1075-1122 AD

§384 Another development in the stages of papal power occurred over the power of the pope to act independently of the civil power. The Investiture Controversy, also known as the Investiture Crisis, began in the late 11th century. It emerged as a conflict between the Holy Roman Emperor and the papacy over the issue of investiture—the practice of secular rulers appointing and investing bishops and other church officials with the symbols of their office, such as the ring and staff.

§385 The controversy continued over the subsequent decades, involving multiple emperors and popes. Various attempts at reconciliation were made, but the fundamental question of who had the authority to appoint and invest bishops remained unresolved.

§386 The Investiture Controversy reached a significant turning point with the Concordat of Worms in 1122 AD. This agreement, reached between Emperor Henry V and Pope Calixtus II, sought to find a compromise. It allowed the pope to invest bishops with spiritual authority (ring and staff), while the emperor could invest them with temporal authority (symbols of their feudal status).

Gregory VII 1015-1085 AD, r. 1073-1085 AD, vs. Henry IV

§387 One of the key moments that sparked the Investiture Controversy was the dispute between Holy Roman Emperor Henry IV and Pope Gregory VII (also known as Hildebrand). Gregory VII sought to reform the Church by asserting papal authority over ecclesiastical appointments and by advocating for the elimination of simony (the buying and selling of church offices). In 1075 AD, Gregory VII issued the *Dictatus Papae*, a collection of papal decrees that included a ban on lay investiture and the supremacy of the pope over *temporal* powers.

I That the Roman church is founded by the Lord alone.

II That the Roman pontiff alone is called universal by right.

III That he alone can depose or reconcile bishops.

...

IX That all princes are to kiss the feet of the pope alone.

X That the name of him alone is to be recited in the churches.

XI That this is the only name in the world.

XII That for him it is licit to depose emperors.

...

XIX That he himself must be judged by no one.

...

XXII That the Roman church has never erred nor will ever err in perpetuity, as scripture testifies.

XXIII That the Roman pontiff, if he has been canonically ordained, is indubitably made holy by the merits of Blessed Peter,...

...

The *Dictatus* can be summarized:

I The pope is never wrong.

II If the pope is ever wrong, see rule No. I

In response to Gregory's VII's reforms, Henry faced excommunication by the pope in 1076 AD. This marked a significant escalation in the conflict. Henry, facing political pressure and a threat to his rule, journeyed to Canossa in 1077 AD to seek absolution from the pope, demonstrating the depth of the power struggle.

The Gregorian vision

§388 Gregory envisioned the Church as an embodiment of theocracy, nearly reaching its perfected state. He regarded the Church as an entity of absolute divinity, composed mainly of a hierarchical structure, with the majority of the laity being subservient resources for governance and exploitation. The pope stood as the leader of this priestly entity, the sole conduit for spiritual blessings to mankind. The Church, headed by the pope, represented the purpose for which the world existed, with all else subordinate to its interests. Civil governments were acknowledged as existing only by the divine (papal) permit, serving the Church's objectives.

§389 Peter and his successors, the bishops of Rome, received the full power that Christ would wield if present on Earth. The pope assumed the role as the vicar of Christ, the one who takes Christ's place on earth. Just as Peter held two symbolic swords and Christ deemed them sufficient, the pope's successors inherited both spiritual *and* secular authority. The authority of secular rulers was valid solely through the approval of the vicar of Christ. With the pursuit of perfect unity and harmony in world administration, the divinely appointed vicar of Christ served as the sole center of unity, demanding complete submission from both secular and ecclesiastical leaders (see *Unam Sanctum*, p. 154).

§390 When heresy emerged and spread, it necessitated eradication, even if it led to the destruction of numerous faithful individuals. Should a secular ruler resist papal encroachment, their throne could be declared vacant, open to any Catholic prince willing to seize it. Subjects would be forbidden from pledging allegiance, sacraments would be withheld, and a deadly crusade might be proclaimed. All actions converged on the central objective of securing absolute temporal and spiritual dominion.

§391 After Gregory, the Crusades in the East were nurtured and compelled, as circumstances demanded, in pursuit of this world dominion. The unification of European kings under the papal banner was a significant papal achievement. The

aspiration to conquer the Eastern empire and the Muslim powers amplified the papacy's interest in these devastating campaigns. Skillful manipulation of Crusade opportunities facilitated the acquisition of extensive European territories, greatly advancing the papal goal of universal dominion.

§392 In this context, a comprehensive theocracy emerged. The pope, at the theocracy's helm, occupied a position akin to that of God on Earth, possessing an unprecedented freedom to employ even immoral means to enforce authority. The plan was grandiose, envisioning a globally consistent administration from a singular center, adhering to a singular ideal. Advocates believed this governance would bring an end to civil and religious conflicts, fostering universal peace, goodwill, and righteousness. Yet it is easy to see that to realize or perpetuate such a system, civil and religious freedom must be remorselessly suppressed [the hallmark of Utopianism]. The only permissible freedom would be that enjoyed by those fully aligned with the theocracy's ideal, finding fulfillment in their submission to its authority.

(adapted from Newman 1, 342-343)

• The Crusades 1096-1270

§393 The Crusades were a demonstration of the power of the papacy to use temporal power. They were a series of military campaigns with complex beginnings, durations, and endings. The First Crusade (1096-1099 AD) is often considered the most successful, resulting in the capture of Jerusalem and the establishment of Crusader states in the Holy Land. Subsequent Crusades followed, each with its own objectives and outcomes. Below is an overview of how some of the major Crusades concluded:

- First Crusade (1096-1099 AD): The First Crusade culminated in the capture of Jerusalem by the Crusader forces in 1099 AD. The city was taken after a long and brutal siege. The Crusaders established the Kingdom of Jerusalem and several other Crusader states in the region. The First Crusade is generally seen as a success from the Crusaders' perspective.
- Second Crusade (1147-1149 AD): The Second Crusade was launched in response to the fall of the County of Edessa to Muslim forces. However, the campaign ended in failure, as the Crusaders were unable to recapture Edessa or make significant gains in the region.
- Third Crusade (1189-1192 AD): The Third Crusade aimed to recapture Jerusalem after it fell to Saladin, the Muslim leader. While the Crusaders, including King Richard the Lionheart of England, achieved some successes, they did not fully retake Jerusalem. The campaign ended in a truce known as the Treaty of Jaffa, which allowed Christian pilgrims access to the city's holy sites.
- **Fourth Crusade (1202-1204 AD): The Fourth Crusade took an unexpected turn when the Crusaders diverted their efforts towards Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. The city was captured and looted in 1204 AD, leading to the establishment of a Latin Empire in Constantinople. This diversion from the original goal of retaking Jerusalem led to widespread criticism and condemnation.**

§394 Later Crusades: Subsequent Crusades, such as the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, and

Eighth Crusades, continued to take place over the 13th century. Some achieved limited successes, such as the recapture of some coastal cities, but none were able to fully regain Jerusalem. By this time, support for Crusades was waning in Europe, and the Crusader states in the Holy Land were gradually losing ground to Muslim forces.

§395 The Crusades officially ended in the 13th century, with the final Crusader stronghold in the Holy Land, the city of Acre, falling to the Mamluk Sultanate in 1291 AD.

The effect of the Fourth Crusade

§396 Of all the Crusades, the Fourth Crusade had the most interesting effect. The Fourth Crusade was diverted from its original objective of retaking Jerusalem to an attack on Constantinople.

§397 The Crusaders who gathered for the Fourth Crusade faced significant financial challenges. Many of them were heavily in debt, both individually and collectively, due to the costs of raising armies and outfitting them for the journey to the Holy Land.

§398 Venice, a powerful maritime republic, had agreed to provide the Crusaders with transport to the Holy Land in exchange for a considerable sum of money. However, when the Crusaders arrived in Venice in 1202 AD, they were unable to pay the full amount. As a result, the decision was ultimately made to attack Constantinople.

§399 A claimant to the Byzantine throne, Alexios IV Angelos, promised substantial financial and military aid to the Crusaders if they helped him gain power. The idea of capturing a wealthy city like Constantinople became increasingly attractive. The allure of capturing the riches of a major city may have swayed some Crusaders to change their objectives.

§400 The attack on the Byzantine capital was successful, and Alexios IV was crowned co-emperor. However, internal conflicts and the inability to meet the Crusaders' financial demands led to tensions between the Crusaders and the Byzantines.

§401 The situation in Constantinople deteriorated, and in April 1204 AD, the Crusaders launched a full-scale assault on the city. The city was captured, and over a period of several days, the Crusaders engaged in widespread looting and destruction. The Byzantine Empire was divided, and a Latin Empire was established in Constantinople.

§402 The Fourth Crusade's diversion and eventual attack on Constantinople were met with shock and condemnation by many in the Christian world, including other Crusader leaders and the Pope. The events of the Fourth Crusade marked a significant turning point in the history of both the Crusades and the Byzantine Empire, leading to the fragmentation of Byzantine territories and the weakening of its influence in the region. This contributed to its weakness and failure 250 years later in the fall of Constantinople.

- The Fourth Crusade's capture and plunder of Constantinople in 1204 led to widespread looting, destruction, and loss of valuable resources. Many of the city's treasures, artworks, and cultural artifacts were either taken or destroyed. This economic devastation left the Byzantine Empire in a weakened state, making it harder to recover and defend itself against future threats.

- The sacking of Constantinople by the Crusaders led to the creation of the Latin Empire, a short-lived Crusader state that ruled over parts of the Byzantine territories. This fragmentation of the Byzantine Empire into various states weakened its central authority and its ability to resist external pressures.
- The sacking of Constantinople by fellow Christians caused lasting resentment among the Byzantines towards Western powers. It shattered the sense of unity within the Christian world and undermined the Byzantines' trust in potential allies. This division and distrust hampered the Byzantine Empire's ability to form strong alliances against future threats, including the Ottomans.
- The Crusaders' conquest of Constantinople resulted in the loss of significant Byzantine territories. These losses further eroded the empire's strength and resources, making it difficult to maintain a coherent defense against external aggressors.
- The damage inflicted on Constantinople's defenses during the Fourth Crusade's siege and capture weakened the city's ability to withstand future assaults. The Fourth Crusade's actions left the city less prepared to resist subsequent attacks, including the Ottomans' siege in 1453.
- In the decades following the sacking of Constantinople, the empire struggled with internal strife, political instability, and shifting alliances. This weakened Byzantium's ability to mount a cohesive defense when faced with external threats from the Moslems.

• **The Fourth Lateran Council and the Sacramental system 1215**

§403 There were 71 canons that dealt with reforms and other matters at the Fourth Lateran Council¹⁴, but of special note was the clarification of the Seven Sacraments. Other sacraments of the past were not included so that the seven are the ones recognized today in the Catholic Church. They included such things as special anointing or foot washing. This council was called in response especially to the challenge of dissenters (p. 161) that were mounting. It was called at a time when papal power was strong shortly before the death of its most mighty pope.

There were in attendance seventy-one primates and archbishops, four hundred and twelve bishops, and eight hundred priors and abbots. East and West participated. Most of the Oriental patriarchates were represented. The organization of a new crusade was the most prominent topic of discussion. It was enacted that the "peace of God" be kept among Christian princes for five years to achieve this end. Union with the Greek Church was also considered. The doctrine of Transubstantiation was now for the first time defined. The word itself seems to have been now first used. Ample provision was made for the persecution of heretics. Toleration of heresy was made a ground for punishment and even death.

(Newman 1, 347)

The Sacraments were:

¹⁴Also known as the Fourth Lateran Ecumenical Council.

- 1 - Baptism: the necessity of Baptism for salvation. It declared that Baptism is essential for all individuals to be cleansed from original sin and to receive the grace necessary for salvation, ensuring their incorporation into the Church.
- 2 - Transubstantiation: The doctrine of transubstantiation, which refers to the change of the substance of bread and wine into the body and blood of Christ during the Eucharist, was officially defined and affirmed
- 3 - Penance: The council affirmed the necessity of confession and penance for the forgiveness of sins. It emphasized the role of the priest as the minister of reconciliation in the sacrament of Penance (also known as Confession or Reconciliation).
- 4 - Marriage: The council addressed matters related to the sacrament of Matrimony, including issues of consent, impediments to marriage, and the validity of marriages. It clarified the Church's authority over marriage and set standards for the solemnization of marriages.
- 5 - Anointing of the Sick: While not extensively discussed, the council reaffirmed the practice of the Anointing of the Sick as a sacrament for the spiritual comfort and healing of the seriously ill.
- 6 - Confirmation and 7 - Holy Orders: The council affirmed the importance of the sacraments of Confirmation and Holy Orders in the spiritual life of the Church.

• The Inquisition 1231-1378

§404 The Medieval Inquisition refers to a series of efforts by the Catholic Church to combat heresy, especially during the 12th to 14th centuries. Its activities were not centralized and varied across different regions of Europe.

§405 The roots of the Medieval Inquisition can be traced back to the 11th and 12th centuries when various movements, such as the Cathars (also known as Albigensians) and the Waldensians, gained popularity in southern France and other parts of Europe. These movements challenged the established doctrines and practices of the Catholic Church, prompting the Church to take measures to suppress them. Pope Lucius III issued the papal bull *Ad Abolendam* in 1184 AD, which condemned heretical movements and provided guidelines for their suppression. Pope Innocent III further emphasized the Church's stance on heresy.

§406 In 1231, Pope Gregory IX established the Papal Inquisition, a formalized institution tasked with identifying and combating heresy. Dominican and Franciscan friars often played key roles in this effort. The Inquisition aimed to identify and eliminate heresy through various means, including questioning, interrogation, and the use of informants, often relying on local authorities to carry out investigations and punishments..

§407 The papal bull *Ad Extirpanda* issued by Pope Innocent IV in 1252 AD, authorized the use of torture in the interrogation of heretics.

§408 By the late 14th century, the activities of the Medieval Inquisition began to decline, partly due to changing social and political dynamics.

§409 The focus of the Church's efforts shifted from combating heresy to addressing other challenges that the Inquisition contributed to, including the Western Schism and the rise of humanism.

• The Babylonian Captivity of the papacy 1309-1376 and the Western Schism 1378-1439

Power corrupts

§410 From the establishment of papal power over the Investiture Controversy (p. 147), the popes' exercise of power was characterized by what commonly happens to those who give in to the temptation of power: power corrupts and absolute power

corrupts absolutely. The larger the administration, the less man is able to exercise control over it. This is the failure of all centralization of control by government. At the height of the popes power, their performance led to the weakness that would crack open the door to allow a flood of change by the Renaissance followed by the Reformation in the next age to come.

§411 The Crusades had profound effects on people's attitudes, contributing to a strong aversion to upholding papal absolutism.

§412 The Inquisition's stringent enforcement of doctrinal and procedural conformity, along with other methods, became so suffocating that it compelled previously subdued and non-confrontational dissent to come into the limelight with great force.

§413 The expansion of the church's administrative apparatus and the infusion of opulent living within the Roman Curia necessitated vast resources. This led to the creation of exceedingly unscrupulous and oppressive mechanisms for acquiring funds.

- Annates (First Fruits): revenue collected from a new bishop or other office.
- Expectancies: promises made to clerics for future ecclesiastical positions that were not yet vacant. These arrangements often came with financial considerations.
- Reservations: Reservations involved the Pope or higher church authorities reserving certain ecclesiastical positions or benefices for themselves or their appointees. Reservations could lead to political and financial manipulation within the church hierarchy.
- **Indulgences: Indulgences were a form of remission of temporal punishment for sins, often in exchange for acts of piety, penance, or charity. By making a financial donation to the church or performing specific religious deeds, individuals could obtain an indulgence and reduce their time in purgatory. During the 13th century, indulgences were sometimes sold to raise funds for various church projects, including the construction of cathedrals or support for the Crusades.**
- **Dispensations: Dispensations for the violation of these restrictions were readily granted for money. It became a leading aim with the popes to enrich their relations, especially their illegitimate children. Hence *Nepotism* was practiced in such a way as to scandalize Christendom.**

The Big Idea:
The papacy was generally falling into disdain.

§414 Even devout Catholics began to assert that within the Roman Curia, everything could be had for money.

§415 The imposition of celibacy on clergy and the expansion of monastic orders, without ethical guidelines, resulted in a surge of immoral behavior. Licentiousness was pervasive and the moral authority of clergy and monks became tarnished.

§416 The papacy progressively turned into an object of ambition, causing the papal administration to weaken and be disdained.

Neglect by German emperors strengthened French influence

§417 German emperors had dominated during this time but their neglect allowed for the abuses of papal power to create a void that would be filled by French leadership. The abuse of papal power came to a head with the Bull of Pope Boniface VIII, *Unam Sanctum*, in 1302. He claimed absolute power over all mankind and temporal power of government.

The Big Idea:

German emperors over the Holy Roman Empire generally neglected any oversight they could have exercised. The pope moved to claim universal spiritual and temporal power.

- ...the Church is one, holy, catholic, and also apostolic...outside of her there is neither salvation nor the remission of sins
- ...there is one body and one head, not two heads like a monster; that is, Christ and the Vicar of Christ, Peter and the successor of Peter
- **...in its power are two swords; namely, the spiritual and the temporal...both are in the power of the Church...The former is of the priest; the latter is by the hand of kings and soldiers, but at the will and sufferance of the priest.**
- **...that spiritual power surpasses in dignity and in nobility any temporal power whatever**
- ...it belongs to spiritual power to establish the terrestrial power and to pass judgement if it has not been good. Thus is accomplished the prophecy of Jeremias concerning the Church and the ecclesiastical power: 'Behold to-day I have placed you over nations, and over kingdoms' and the rest.
- **...if the terrestrial power err, it will be judged by the spiritual power..but if the highest power of all err, it can be judged only by God, and not by man**
- This authority, however, (though it has been given to man and is exercised by man), is not human but rather divine, granted to Peter by a divine word and reaffirmed to him (Peter) and his successors
- Furthermore, we declare, we proclaim, we define that it is absolutely necessary for salvation that every human creature be subject to the Roman Pontiff.

– From papalencyclicals.net/bon08/b8unam.htm

The Babylonian Captivity of the Church (or Papacy) 1309-1376 AD

§418 The outlandish claim of power by Boniface did not sit well with French interests. The conflict revolved around issues of papal authority, taxation of the clergy, and the power struggle between secular rulers and the Church. In 1303, King Philip IV had Boniface VIII arrested, leading to his death shortly afterward.

§419 Following the death of Boniface VIII, a French cardinal was elected as Pope Clement V in 1305. Clement's papacy marked a significant departure from tradition when he chose to reside not in Rome but in Avignon, France. This marked the beginning of the Avignon Papacy, also known as the Babylonian Captivity.

§420 During this period, a series of French popes resided in Avignon, and their decisions were often influenced by the French monarchy.

- By the manifest subserviency of the papacy to French interests other nations were alienated.
- The shameless immorality of the papal court destroyed respect for the hierarchy and caused a general demand for reform.
- Every known way of raising money was carried to its extreme development, and the intolerableness of the burden came to be generally felt throughout Europe. The conviction grew that the people were being imposed upon.
- The French government itself and the University of Paris soon became utterly disgusted with the Avignon court and were among the most persistent advocates of reform. Germany, England, and Bohemia, one after another, revolted from papal domination.
- The pope was declared by theologians, jurists, and poets to be unworthy of confidence. Many regarded him as antichrist.
- We [refer] to the great revolt in Germany under Louis the Bavarian, that in England with which the name of Wycliffe is so closely associated, and that in Bohemia connected with the name of Huss. In all of these countries there grew up an extensive vernacular literature in which the vices of clergy and monks, high and low, were mercilessly ridiculed or scathingly condemned. These anti-papal movements will come up [later (see p. 161)] for fuller consideration.
- Each pope during this period was compelled as a condition of his election to promise to restore the papal court to Rome, but each found some excuse for violating his oath. The perfidy of the popes intensified the conviction that they were antichrist.

(Newman 1, 352-343)

§421 The Avignon Papacy lasted for about 70 years. In 1376, Pope Gregory XI, the last Avignon pope, decided to return the papal court to Rome in an effort to restore the papacy's legitimacy.

The Western Schism 1378-1417

§422 This did not create a complete resolution to the problems. Gregory's death in 1378 led to a complicated situation known as the Western Schism (it was also known

as the *Papal Schism*).¹⁵ Two factions of cardinals elected two different popes: Urban VI in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon. This resulted in a split within the Catholic Church, with different regions of Europe recognizing different popes.

§423 During part of the time France, Scotland, Savoy, Lorraine, Castile, Aragon, and Naples adhered to one pope, while Germany, England, Denmark, Poland, Prussia, and the rest of Italy, adhered to another. The spectacle of two popes (sometimes three) excommunicating and anathematizing each other was by no means edifying. The disaffection that had long been manifesting itself in England and Bohemia broke out into open schism during this period.

§424 The Western Schism lasted for several decades, with efforts to resolve it, including multiple councils and attempts at mediation. The schism was finally resolved at the Council of Constance (1414–1418 AD), which elected Pope Martin V as the sole legitimate pope, effectively ending the Avignon Papacy and reuniting the Catholic Church under a single papal authority. Even still, there were a number of councils that followed to promote healing. Only the Fall of Constantinople (p. 157) in 1453 effectively ended the problems directly created by the schism.

Preparation for the Renaissance and Reformation

§425 The Babylonian Captivity of the Church is significant because it represents a period of turmoil and division within the Catholic Church. It raised questions about the papacy's authority, the relationship between church and state, and the need for church reform. The events of this period also set the stage for the larger religious and political changes that would unfold during the Renaissance and Reformation eras (p. 158, 178).

• Scholasticism 1100-1300 AD

§426 The scholastic method emerged around 1100 AD, was more fully developed around 1200 AD, but started to develop problems in the 1300s.

The Big Idea:
Scholasticism promised to dig deeper and avoid dogma, but it fell into nit-picking and triviality

The term scholasticism (or the teachings of the schools) has long been used to designate the formal theologizing conducted according to the categories of the Aristotelian philosophy and with the use of the deductive method, that prevailed during the Middle Ages and later.

The theology and philosophy of the earlier Middle Ages had consisted largely of a concatenation of pertinent passages from Fathers, decretals, etc., in support of each authoritative proposition. Commentaries on the Bible were scarcely more than *catenae* of exegetical remarks gleaned from earlier writers. Later the dialectics of Aristotle

¹⁵Sometimes called The Great Schism, not to be confused with the East-West schism which is more often called the Great Schism

came to be applied and theology assumed a more systematic form. The authority of Aristotle in all matters of formal reasoning came to be regarded as almost absolute. The work of the theological writer was now to draw out, according to the categories of Aristotle, as many conclusions as possible from each authoritative proposition. Little reference was had to the practical value of the conclusions, and theology degenerated into idle hairsplitting, sometimes into gross irreverence.

The frivolousness and formalism of medieval theology brought about reactions which resulted in evangelical revolt, mysticism, humanism, and finally in the Protestant Revolution.

(Newman I 318-322)

German Mysticism

§427 Master Eckhart (d. 1327) represents German mystical thinking that arose in reaction to the scholastic hairsplitting which had been a reaction to dogmatic rigidity before it. They were not branded as heretics, but certainly contributed to a departure from orthodox slavishness.

God and I are one in knowing. God's essence is his knowing, and God's knowing makes me to know him. Therefore is his knowing my knowing. . . Mine eye and the eye of God are one eye, one vision, one knowledge, and one love. The birth of the Son takes place in each soul that submits itself to divine influence as it occurred in Jesus. Historical Christianity with its revelation and its redemption sinks into insignificance in comparison with the individual experience of union and communion with the infinite source of being. The incarnation he regarded as the result of the striving of all creatures since the fall to produce a man who should restore harmony. In the creation of the first man Christ was the object. The earthly life of Christ is valuable as an example.

(Newman I, 328)

• The Fall of Constantinople and the Eastern Roman Empire 1453

AD

§428 Historians recognize the Fall of the Eastern Roman Empire as the end of the Middle Ages. The capture of Constantinople marked the end of the Byzantine Empire's continuous existence since the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century. Constantinople had been weakened much earlier by the Fourth Crusade (p. 150).

§429 The Fall of Constantinople also had significant repercussions for the broader region, marking a turning point in the history of Europe and the Mediterranean. The Ottomans established Constantinople as their capital and transformed it into Istanbul, which remains one of the largest cities in the world today.

§430 The fall of Constantinople had a profound impact on European politics, trade, and culture. It encouraged European exploration and led to increased interest in finding alternative trade routes to the East. It also contributed to the spread of Byzantine culture and knowledge to the West, influencing the Renaissance period (p. 158).

§431 The flood of literature that had been repressed or abandoned in the West and Eastern scholarship created a surge in study as all this information had to be processed. The West had long been dependent on a faulty Latin translation of the Scriptures, Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Now the Greek texts that had been preserved would dominate as they were used to correct for the influence of the Latin. This is described in *The High*

Renaissance, p. 158.

• The High Renaissance 1450 to 1500

Humanism

§432 Renaissance humanism was primarily concerned with the revival of classical learning, the development of well-rounded individuals, and the celebration of human potential within a Christian context. It was a cultural and intellectual movement that aimed to harmonize classical ideals with Christianity. Contemporary humanism, on the other hand, has evolved into a broader movement with a secular emphasis on human values, ethics, and rationalism.

Cultural Rebirth

One of the most remarkable phenomena of the latter part of the Middle Ages was the revival of learning. The decline of the Roman Empire witnessed a decline in literary production. The barbarian invasions swept away, for the most part, the culture that remained. Charlemagne took energetic measures for the revival of learning, and gave a great stimulus to theological studies.

From the time of Charlemagne [800 AD] there was considerable literary activity in the monasteries, but this was for the most part misdirected. Under the influence of dead formalism in general, and of Aristotelian philosophy and dialectics, which gave shape to the theological and philosophical productions of the Middle Ages, theology and philosophy degenerated into endless and aimless hairsplitting. Deductive, rather than inductive in its methods, medieval theology consisted in the drawing out from a single proposition recognized as authoritative (a text of Scripture, or an expression of a pope, council, or early theologian), of as many conclusions, positive and negative, as possible. From each of these conclusions, arrived at by logical processes, in like manner an almost infinite number of other conclusions were drawn.

Thus resting entirely upon ecclesiastical authority, there was little effort or inclination among the medieval theologians to arrive at new views of truth. The church had determined how Scripture was to be interpreted, and the Latin text of the Bible was regarded as infallibly correct. There was, therefore, no reason why medieval theologians should attempt to find out the true meaning of the Scriptures by a study of their original languages, and of the historical relations of their different parts. Medieval theology furnished one of the strongest barriers to the progress of true enlightenment.

In the thirteenth century the Latin and Greek classics, long since almost forgotten in the West, had begun to be studied and admired...By the middle of the fifteenth century considerable interest in classical studies had already been awakened in Italy.

...finally, the fall of Constantinople (1453 AD), caused a large number of Greek scholars to take refuge in Italy. Here they were welcomed, and their services as teachers of the Greek language and philosophy were in great demand. In 1450 AD a school was founded by Cosmo de' Medici for the promotion of classical studies. The writings of Plato were especially cultivated, and the Platonic philosophy was contrasted with the scholastic theology to the disadvantage of [scholastic theology]. It was even shown that the schoolmen had not properly understood Aristotle, whom they professed to follow.

The study of antiquity became an enthusiasm. The monastic libraries were

ransacked for manuscripts of the Greek and Roman classics, which were regarded as more precious than gold. To write in [the style of the Roman poet Cicero] became a great object of ambition and the study of Greek became the fashion of the day. The art of printing, discovered about the middle of the century, was a powerful auxiliary to the new learning. Architecture, painting, and sculpture participated in the great aesthetic awakening. Popes and civil rulers alike were lavish in their expenditures on literature, architecture, and the fine arts.

As might have been expected, the tendency of the one-sided cultivation of the Greek classics was to promote aesthetic, far more than religious advancement. The cultivation of the elegant literature of Greece and Rome incapacitated men for appreciating even the good elements of the barbarously written scholastic theology. The elevated sentiments and ideal conceptions of Platonism were held by many to be far more divine than the stiff formalism of a Thomas Aquinas. Such cultivation and admiration of classical literature was sure to lead to the extreme of denying the superiority of the Christian religion to paganism; but after the first reaction, a harmonizing of Christianity with Platonism was naturally attempted. This effort led to the study of the Neo-Platonic writings (Plotinus, Porphyry, Proclus, Pseudo-Dionysius, etc.), and to a comparison of these with the biblical writings in their original languages. Thus the study of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures was revived.

This study of the Greek and Hebrew Scriptures, without scholastic prepossession, was sure to lead to a better understanding of the Scriptures and a better appreciation of the spirit of Christianity. Without the revival of learning, Colet, and Reuchlin, and Erasmus, and Luther, and Zwingli, and Calvin, would have been impossible.

The Renaissance involved an earnest application of the mind to nature with the determination to penetrate its secrets. It involved a recognition of the dignity of life and of mind, and of the right and duty of the individual to cultivate his powers to the utmost, and to enjoy in a rational way what nature has provided. The superstitions of the past had to give way before the spread of enlightenment by the new learning, with its new philosophy and its new science. The spirit of the Renaissance pervaded the religious, social, and political life of the time. The papacy itself came under its spell, and several of the popes were far more devoted to literature and art than to the interests of religion or even the maintenance of ecclesiastical power. Educational methods were revolutionized. Theology itself experienced a new birth...

We may say that in connection with the revival of learning, the principle of emancipation from authority in matters of thought and worship, which is the distinctive idea of modern times, as compared with medieval, was developed. This idea, though a fundamental one in Protestantism, was not fully apprehended by the great Reformers. While it was claimed on their own behalf, it was not accorded to others. But it was so involved in the origin of the movement and in the spirit of the times, that it was perfectly sure of final recognition.

The Reformation was, therefore, only a single phase of a movement which had already made considerable progress. The first manifestations of the modern spirit were humanistic, and were lacking in religious earnestness and zeal. The movement of which Erasmus was the best representative, only needed to have infused into it the patriotic and religious spirit of a Luther in order that it might be able to shake the religion of Europe to its very foundations.

(Newman 1, 329-332)

• **The Movable Type Printing Press 1440 AD**

Contribution to the Renaissance

§433 The printing press was invented by Johannes Gutenberg in the mid-15th century. This marked a transformative moment in the history of communication and contributed significantly to the spread of knowledge and information. Gutenberg's innovation involved the use of movable metal type to create individual characters to compose text.

§434 The printing press facilitated the mass production of books, making written knowledge more accessible and affordable. This democratization of information played a crucial role in the spread of education and learning.

§435 The availability of printed religious texts, such as the Bible, enabled wider access to religious teachings. This contributed to the spread of religious ideas and the Reformation movement in the 16th century.

§436 The consistent reproduction of texts helped standardize languages, as spelling and grammatical conventions became more widely accepted.

The press not conducive to the spread of Islam

§437 There were various factors that contributed to the success of printed Western texts compared to Islamic texts:

- **Timing and Adoption:** The printing press was developed and widely adopted in Europe during the mid-15th century, while the Islamic world did not adopt the technology on a large scale until a few centuries later. The timing of the printing press's introduction in Europe gave it an advantage in terms of disseminating knowledge through printed texts.
- **Linguistic and Cultural Diversity:** The Islamic world encompassed a wide range of languages, cultures, and script styles. This diversity made the process of adapting the printing press to different languages and scripts more challenging. In contrast, the Latin alphabet used for many Western languages was relatively simpler to adapt to movable type.
- **Language and Script:** The Arabic script, used for writing many Islamic texts, is cursive and calligraphic, often requiring skilled scribes to create beautiful manuscripts. While Islamic manuscripts are often celebrated for their artistic beauty, the intricacies of the Arabic script made the transition to printing more complex compared to the Latin script used for Western languages.
- **Centralization of Printing:** The Western printing press benefited from a relatively centralized development and dissemination. In Europe, printing centers emerged in major cities, facilitating the spread of printed materials. In the Islamic world, printing was not as centralized, and there were challenges in adapting the technology to different regions.
- **Cultural Factors:** The Islamic textual tradition had a strong focus on manuscript production as a form of art and piety. The production of manuscripts, including calligraphy and illumination, was considered an esteemed craft. This cultural emphasis on the art of manuscript production could have influenced the adoption

of the printing press in the Islamic world.

- Historical Context: Europe's Renaissance and Reformation periods, characterized by a thirst for knowledge and intellectual exploration, created a conducive environment for the rapid dissemination of ideas through printed texts. The religious and cultural dynamics of the time played a role in driving demand for printed materials.

Advancement on Bible translation

§438 The printing press had a profound and direct impact on Bible translation. The availability of the printing press revolutionized the process of producing and distributing Bibles, making it easier to translate, publish, and disseminate the Scriptures to a wider audience.

- Before the printing press, Bibles were handwritten manuscripts, and producing a single copy was a time-consuming and labor-intensive process. The printing press allowed for the mass production which increased availability so that more people could have access to the Scriptures.
- The printing press facilitated the translation of the Bible into various languages. Translators could now work on rendering the Scriptures into the vernacular languages of different regions, knowing that the translated text could be reproduced consistently. This led to an increase in the number of translations of the Bible into languages other than Latin.
- The printing press played a pivotal role in the Protestant Reformation. Figures like Martin Luther translated the Bible into German and used the printing press to distribute their translations and theological writings. This allowed for the spread of new religious ideas and challenges to established authority.
- The printing press ensured greater accuracy and consistency in the reproduction of texts compared to handwritten manuscripts.
- With the printing press, scholars could create study Bibles that included commentary, annotations, and cross-references. These resources provided readers with a deeper understanding of the text and its context.
- The availability of affordable printed Bibles meant that more people, including those outside of religious institutions, could own and read the Scriptures. This contributed to a more informed and engaged laity.

• Dissenters

§439 Sprinkled throughout this entire age were dissenters and the sects that coalesced around them. Although the power struggles to maintain the centralized church dominated this time period, the dissenters struggled against conforming to the statist church system (see

The Big Idea:
There were always churches that operated apart from the dominant state church

Conflict of the Kingdoms, p. 6). Their theologies ranged from very close to Fundamentalist views to heretical. We cannot often be sure of how consistent they were with Fundamentalist theology because much of what we know of them comes from their Catholic opponents who maligned them with bias.

§440 They often did not seek to *reform* the state church, but merely exist as assemblies of worship. They did not seek to participate in the state church system. **What is important to note is that they stood in opposition.** Even though the popes claimed and asserted their supremacy, this church age was not only known as Catholic. The church of Thyatira was *also* known for its works and faith and those who held fast till the advent of the next age.

Paulicians 653- c. 855 AD

§441 The Paulicians were known by the name of the Apostle Paul and rejected common Catholic teachings about baptismal regeneration, veneration of Mary, transubstantiation, etc.

§442 Around 653 AD, during Emperor Constans II's rule, a young man named Constantine (not the emperor) in Armenia showed kindness to a stranger who turned out to be a deacon from a Christian church. This deacon gave Constantine a copy of the Gospels and Paul's Epistles as a token of gratitude. Constantine read these texts and embraced Christianity, leaving behind his former belief in Manichaeism (p. 102).

§443 Constantine became a preacher in Cibossa (Turkey) for nearly three decades, sharing the Christian message and gaining followers. Although the details of how he formed congregations or governed them are unclear, his teachings attracted many. Over time, he was persecuted, and his martyrdom followed. The emperor's officer, Simeon, forced Constantine's congregation to stone him.

§444 Simeon, who intended to convert Constantine's followers back to the Catholic Church, found his efforts futile as they held firm to their beliefs. In fact, Simeon himself converted to Paulicianism due to the compelling arguments presented by the believers. He eventually joined their ranks.

§445 Paulicians' numbers grew, despite challenges, including persecution and warfare, and their influence spread to various regions. Around 810 AD, a surge in followers led to severe persecution from the established church, resulting in mass executions.

§446 The last significant persecution of the Paulicians occurred during the reign of the Byzantine Empress Theodora (*r.* 842-855 AD). This period of intense persecution is often considered the last major episode of suppression against the Paulician movement. Thousands were reportedly put to death during this time, and their communities suffered greatly. The harsh treatment led to retaliation and civil unrest. The Paulicians even sought the support of the Saracens, and regions were embroiled in conflict. Their influence extended to Thrace, Bulgaria, and eventually parts of Europe, including Italy and France.

§447 Despite the challenges faced by the Paulicians, their teachings and influence spread to various regions over time. By the late medieval period, the Paulicians had largely assimilated into other Christian groups or had lost their original identity, but their influence long survived them.

Petrobussians 11th - 12th c.

§448 The Petrobussians formed from the ministry of Peter of Bruys in southern France. Peter was executed around 1131 AD but congregations persisted until internal problems and persecution diminished their numbers.

- They denied that children before they had come to an intelligible age could be saved by the baptism of Christ; that another person's faith could profit those that could not use their own, according to the Scripture: "He that believeth," etc. They protested against the charge that they rebaptized, regarding the christening of infants as unworthy of the name.
- They maintained that temples and churches ought not to be built, and that those built ought to be torn down; that sacred places were not necessary for worship; that God hears prayers as well in a tavern as in a church, in a market-place as in a temple, before a stable as before an altar.
- They maintained that crosses ought to be broken to pieces and burned, denying that the instruments by which Christ was cruelly slain should be adored, or venerated, or supplicated.
- They denied that the body and blood of Christ could be wrought and offered by the priest, regarding the claim to do so as absurd and sacrilegious. They are charged not simply with rejecting the papal view of the Lord's Supper, but also, apparently, with rejecting the outward ordinance altogether. If so, it was probably on account of its superstitious associations.
- Sacrifices, prayers, alms, and other works for the dead, made by the living, they derided, holding that such things were of no avail, each one's lot being decided permanently at death.
- That God is mocked by ecclesiastical chanting, because he who delights in pious feelings alone, can neither be appealed to by high tones, nor soothed by musical modulations.
- ...rejected the authority of the Fathers and of tradition, adhering to the Scriptures alone.

(Newman 1 379)

Cathari 1149-1270 AD

§449 The Cathari¹⁶, or pure ones, was a distinctly heretical gnostic sect that sprang up in France under the influence of the Bogomils (not covered in our studies). Their significance is due to the fact that people were attracted to them because of their preaching against the abuses of Catholicism. They were destroyed in massacres in the Albigensian Crusade of 1209-1229 AD, although their influence persisted for a period of time. When asked how the Crusaders should distinguish the heretics from true Christians, a representative of the pope was reported to have said, "Kill them all. God will know his own." The Inquisition was effective in eliminating their power.

Henricians 1116-1151 AD

¹⁶Also known as Albigenses from Albi, France, where they lived.

§450 The Henricians were the fruit of the ministry of the pre-reformer Henry of Lausanne (p. 166). They rejected the sacraments, rituals, and clerical hierarchy of the Catholic Church. They believed that the Church had become corrupt and that its practices had strayed from the true teachings of Christianity. The movement emphasized individual piety and a personal relationship with God. They rejected the need for intermediaries, such as priests, in one's spiritual connection to God. The Henricians practiced extreme asceticism, including poverty and a renunciation of material possessions. They aimed to live in a manner that mirrored the lives of the early Christian ascetics. Although Henry died about 1148, his teaching still bore influence. The efforts of Bernard of Clairvaux were able to bring people back to Roman orthodoxy.

The Waldenses 1170 AD - current

§451 The ministry of Peter Waldo (*c.* 1140 - *c.* 1205 AD) provided the foundation for the Waldenses. Waldo emphasized Biblical literacy and making the Bible available to laypeople. This challenged the Catholic Church's role as sole interpreter of Scripture.

§452 The Waldensians¹⁷ who followed were very much in tune with Waldo's teachings. They did not believe that baptism itself conferred grace or removed original sin, as was commonly taught by the Catholic Church. They preached and taught the Bible with others, even without formal ordination.

§453 The Waldenses allowed laypeople to administer baptism. They believed that the bread and wine used in Communion represented the body and blood of Christ but were not transformed into His actual body and blood. They believed that communion was a way to remember and proclaim Christ's death until His return.

§454 They rejected the sale of indulgences and the veneration of relics. They viewed the pope as the Antichrist and the church of Rome to be Mystery Babylon.

§455 The Waldenses originated in France, but due to persecution they settled first in the Alpine Valleys of Italy, then Switzerland, Germany and the Czech Republic, the rest of Europe and, much later, the United States.

§456 Today, the Waldensian Church, officially known as the Union of Methodist and Waldensian Churches, continues to exist as a Protestant denomination with a presence in Italy and other parts of the world. The Waldensian movement's legacy is a testament to their perseverance, commitment to biblical principles, and the enduring impact of their emphasis on lay ministry, voluntary poverty, and direct engagement with Scripture.

The Catholic Response to Dissenters

§457 Councils were called to condemn the dissenters as heretics in the Inquisition (see p. 152). But the Dominican and Franciscan orders were created to respond to the spirit of the times with their own preachers going out to promote Catholic doctrine in the 1200s.

¹⁷It is argued about the exact connection between Waldo and the Waldenses. For our purposes, we will take one of the common views that the Waldenses came out of the ministry of Waldo.

• **Early reform attempts**

§458 Across the medieval period, men who addressed abuses within the state church were plentiful. There were even popes who sought reform. There is no definite starting point that determines who should be included in this category.

The Big Idea:
While some churches operated apart from the state church, there were efforts underway within the state church to change.

Claudius of Turin m. 810-827 AD

§459 Claudius of Turin, was a native of Spain sent by the Emperor Louis the Pious as bishop of Turin to counteract Mohammedan influence and to contend against the prevailing heathenism in northern Italy...He denounced image worship and removed images from the churches over which he presided. Departed saints, he taught, do not wish to be worshiped and can render us no service. Prayers for the dead are of no avail. The worship of the cross he regarded as absurd. We had as well worship every virgin, because Christ was born of a virgin, and every manger because he rested in one. We are to bear the cross, not worship it. Crucifixes were an abomination to him. Pilgrimages to Rome and elsewhere for merit he discountenanced, holding to the futility of an external works as means of gaining the divine favor. He denied that any one is apostolical because he sits in the seat of an apostle. He denied that Peter had received any power to bind and to loose and regarded him as the divinely commissioned founder of the Jewish, as Paul was of the Gentile, church.

§460 That so thoroughgoing and aggressive an evangelical should have been permitted to end his life in the episcopate of the hierarchical church is evidence of the comparative freedom that still existed, and there can be no doubt but that his influence long continued to be felt in Northern Italy and Southern France.
(Newman 1, 377)

Arnold of Brescia c. 1090–1155 AD (and the Arnoldists)

§461 Arnold of Brescia was born in Brescia, a city in northern Italy. He studied theology and canon law in France before returning to Italy. His actions centered on the separation of the Church from secular authority and the return of the Church to a more simple and spiritually focused existence. He believed that the Church should have no temporal power and that the Pope should focus solely on spiritual matters. He urged people to reject the authority of Pope Adrian IV and supported the establishment of a republican government in Rome. He was eventually excommunicated by the Church and was expelled from Rome in 1145. Arnold's advocacy for civic autonomy and republican government resonated with many in Italy who were dissatisfied with the rule of secular rulers who were heavily influenced by the Church. Although Arnold was eventually captured and executed, his ideas left a lasting legacy.

Henry of Lausanne m. 1116-1148 AD

§462 Henry of Lausanne began preaching in LeMans, France, as an ascetic itinerant preacher invited to serve in an interim capacity. He was very convincing and greatly influenced many churches. One critic summed up his teaching: rejection of the doctrinal and disciplinary authority of the church; recognition of the Gospel freely interpreted as the sole rule of faith; condemnation of the baptism of infants, of the eucharist, of the sacrifice of the mass, of the communion of saints, and of prayers for the dead; and refusal to recognize any form of worship or liturgy. Those who subscribed to his teaching were known as Henricians (p. 164). He was imprisoned and died around 1148.

• Papal efforts for reform

§463 Dissenters (p. 161) and pre-reformers (p. 167) were catalysts for change. Their work leveraged principles to trigger the large scale transformation of the next church age in the Reformation. However, in the larger context of the church system, the consolidation and strengthening of papal power was not the only factor that was at play in the explosive nature of the Reformation. There was also the pressure from *within* the Roman state Church that some of the popes were trying to address, not just the pressure of the dissenters and pre-reformers. Various efforts by a number of popes contributed to the growing pressure for the Reformation.

Any efforts of the popes to create reforms was a Sisyphean¹⁸ futility since the state system that was attempting to deal with corruption by its nature *created* corruption with its politicized administration. Such efforts included:

- Pope Leo IX (1049–1054) was a strong advocate for Church reform. He opposed simony and convened synods and councils to address these issues and promote moral discipline among clergy members.
- Pope Gregory VII (1073–1085) initiated the Gregorian Reforms. **One of the central issues addressed by the Gregorian Reforms was the practice of simony, which involved the buying and selling of ecclesiastical offices, and clerical marriage.** Pope Gregory VII believed that simony and clerical marriage led to corruption within the Church, as they compromised the spiritual integrity of clergy members. **He sought to enforce the practice of celibacy among the clergy and eliminate simony. He had a vision of a Church with centralized authority that would be less susceptible to corruption. He believed that only the Pope should have the authority to appoint and invest bishops and other high-ranking church officials, thus reducing the risk of corruption resulting from secular interference. He utilized the power of excommunication to discipline those who resisted his reforms or engaged in corrupt practices.**
- Pope Urban II (1088–1099) is perhaps best known for launching the First Crusade,

¹⁸Sisyphus was a metaphor associated with endless and futile tasks. For his deceitful nature against "the gods," he was punished by having to roll a rock to the top of a hill. However, the rock was "enchanted" to slip and roll back to the bottom. He was thus doomed for eternity.

but he also sought to address internal Church matters. He promoted ecclesiastical reforms, called for the regular holding of synods, and attempted to enforce clerical celibacy.

- Pope Alexander III (1159–1181) faced a tumultuous time marked by conflicts with antipopes and secular rulers. Despite these challenges, he worked to uphold papal authority and promote **reform, especially in terms of curbing simony and corruption within the clergy.**
- Pope Innocent III (1198–1216): at the Fourth Lateran Council (p. 151) not only affirmed the sacramental system and the power of the papacy, but **sought to establish standards for priestly conduct. He intervened in secular affairs to promote moral and ethical conduct.**
- Pope Clement V (1305–1314), while his papacy is often criticized for being too subservient to secular authorities, he did attempt to address issues within the Church, such as **reforming monastic orders and holding councils to address corruption.**
- Pope Nicholas V (1447–1455) made efforts to promote education and culture within the Church. He **supported the Renaissance movement and sought to strengthen the intellectual and spiritual foundation of the Church.** While not primarily focused on combating corruption, his efforts contributed to a broader atmosphere of reform and renewal.

• The Pre-Reformation Efforts

§464 The pre-reformers were those who were like the reformers in the *next* age. They criticized the state church system without leaving it and leading churches outside of the system. Their work is distinguished from other reforming efforts of the Middle Ages simply because they appeared closer to the time of the Reformation and were part of the *spirit* of the Reformation. *Their* work more directly impacted the Reformers. The most commonly referred to *pre-reformers* and their followers are John Wycliffe, the Lollards, Jan Huss, the Hussites, and Girolamo Savonarola.¹⁹

John Wycliffe c. 1328-1384 AD and the Lollards

§465 John Wycliffe ministered during a time of strong national feeling for the maintenance of English independence. This coincided with the time of the Babylonian Captivity of the Church in France (p. 153) and the *Hundred Years War* (1339-1453), which was an off and on conflict with France.

Wycliffe, like his predecessors, was, at first, a thorough churchman. He had strong convictions with regard to the unity of the church...he looked upon schism as the greatest of evils...Yet he was led little by little to assume positions decidedly at variance with the hierarchical church. We can trace three stages in his attitude toward the papacy.

(a) Previous to the time of the [Western Schism (p. 155)], Wycliffe recognized to some extent the pope's authority as the head of the church, while boldly rejecting his usurpations. Even before the schism he declared that "they blaspheme who extol the

¹⁹Girolamo Savonarola is also included as a pre-reformer, but we will not cover his work in this study.

pope above all that is called God," etc.

(b) The [Western Schism] made upon Wycliffe a deep impression, and from this time forth he declared that it would be better for the church of Christ if both popes were deposed.

(c) During Wycliffe's controversy on the Lord's Supper, he was led, by the opposition that he met, to pronounce the pope to be Antichrist, and to see in the papacy the fulfillment of the Apocalyptic prophecies with regard to Antichrist. He now declared that only two orders of ministry were established by Christ—presbyters and deacons—and that the introduction of other orders was the result of the secularization of the church (p. 137). Wycliffe's reformation, if it could not succeed throughout the whole church, must necessarily lead to schism...

[After conflict at the university in which he lost his position and was restored]...Wycliffe was sent as an ambassador to Avignon, where he remained about two years. Observation of the proceedings at Avignon confirmed him in his opposition to the avarice and unscrupulousness of the papal court. The fundamental point in Wycliffe's earlier activity was the deliverance of England from the oppression and extortion of this court, and his polemics were chiefly against the monks, who were the agents and instruments of this oppression and extortion....

[In 1377, Pope Gregory XI issued five papal bulls against Wycliffe's teachings, known as the "Five Bulls against Wycliffe." These bulls condemned specific theological positions held by Wycliffe, including his views on the Eucharist, the authority of the Pope, and the wealth and corruption of the church. These bulls were the first formal condemnation of Wycliffe's ideas by the papacy.]

In 1380 he published his translation of the Bible, which was distributed by his "poor priests" [without the aid of the printing press]. These missionaries met with great acceptance wherever they went, and large numbers were brought through them to reject the papal church, and to despise the monks...

[After teaching against transubstantiation] In 1382 the archbishop of Canterbury, at a council in London, condemned a series of propositions from Wycliffe's writings as heretical. Wycliffe was now obliged to leave Oxford, and to withdraw to his parish at Lutterworth. The rest of his life he spent in writing and preaching. Forty-four years after his death (Dec. 31, 1384) he was condemned as a heretic by the council of Constance (1418), and it was ordered that his bones be removed from consecrated ground. They were burned and the ashes were thrown into the Severn.
(Newman 1 406-411)

Key points about Wycliffe:

- Wycliffe **emphasized the authority of the Bible as the highest source of guidance for Christian faith and practice. He believed that Scripture should be accessible to all, and he advocated for the translation of the Bible into the vernacular language so that ordinary people could read and understand it.**
- Wycliffe **critiqued the wealth and corruption within the Catholic Church.** He believed that the Church should return to the simple, humble lifestyle of the early Christians and that clergy should not possess extensive wealth and land. He also criticized the Church's involvement in secular politics.
- Wycliffe **challenged the doctrine of transubstantiation.** He proposed a metaphorical interpretation, suggesting that the elements remained symbolic of Christ's body and blood.
- Wycliffe **emphasized the idea of the priesthood of all believers,** which meant that

all Christians had direct access to God without the need for intermediaries like priests. This challenged the hierarchical structure of the Church.

- Wycliffe emphasized the role of God's grace in salvation and **criticized the Church's practice of selling indulgences.**
- Wycliffe believed that **the Church should not interfere in the affairs of secular rulers. He advocated for the sovereignty of secular authorities in their own realms and criticized papal claims of authority over temporal matters.**

The Wycliffe Bible 1380s AD

§466 Of special note is the Wycliffe Bible. The translation work of Wycliffe played a significant role in making the Scriptures accessible to the common people by translating the Latin Vulgate into the vernacular Middle English (William Tyndale's New Testament, p. 193, will be the first to be based primarily on the Greek manuscripts).

§467 The actual process of creating manuscript copies of the Wycliffe Bible extended over several decades, and these manuscripts were carefully copied by scribes. Copies were relatively limited in number and were often shared within specific communities or groups.

§468 The translation contributed to the development and standardization of the English language. It also had a cultural impact promoting a national identity. Although translation of the Bible was not unknown before this time, the Wycliffe Bible set a modern precedent for translating the Bible into the vernacular, which was later continued by reformers like William Tyndale. The idea that the Scriptures should be accessible to all people in their own language gained traction and contributed to the Reformation movement and religious literacy. One of the drawbacks of the Wycliffe Bible was that it was translated from the Latin Vulgate.

The Lollards

The followers of Wycliffe, known as the *Poor Priests*, came to be known as Lollards (for some unclear reason).

The circulation of the popular writings of Wycliffe and of his version of the Bible, and the evangelizing activity of his "Poor Priests," brought out into publicity and aggressiveness much of the older evangelical life that had long been latent and multiplied the numbers of those who would recognize no other authority in religion than the word of God.

It is remarkable that Wycliffe's followers consisted largely of the noble and educated classes. This was due in part to the fact that his reformatory teachings had a distinctively patriotic basis.

The Lollards were not hampered by Wycliffe's philosophical realism, and did not hesitate to become schismatics...

(1) *1384-1399*. The Lollards spread rapidly during this time...It is asserted by a Roman Catholic writer of the time, that one could scarcely see two men on the road, but that one was a Wycliffite...In fact, most of the gentry and many of the nobility seem to have been favorers of the new party.

In 1395 the Lollards presented [a petition] to Parliament, in which it is declared that the corruption of the church is the result of pride; that the priesthood which began in Rome is not that priesthood that Christ ordained; that the law of celibacy induces

unnatural vice; that the doctrine of transubstantiation leads to idolatry; that exorcisms and blessings made on wine, bread, water, wax, etc., are practices of necromancy; that prayers for the dead are a false foundation of alms; that auricular confession exalts the pride of the priests, and gives them opportunity for secret conversations for vicious purposes; that homicide through war, or under pretense of law, is expressly contrary to the New Testament; that vows of celibacy made in the church by women are the cause of the most horrible crimes (sins); that arts that do not minister to actual wants, but to pride, should be abolished...denied the power of pope or prelates to excommunicate...or to grant indulgences. They held that any layman has a right to preach and teach the gospel anywhere; that every good man is a priest whether he knows literature or not; and that no ecclesiastic in a sinful state is able to administer ordinances validly...We may say of the Lollards of this time, that they had attained to a position far more evangelical than that of Wycliffe.

Up to 1395 no adequate measures had been adopted for the suppression of the reforming party. The presentation of the [petition] to Parliament, the accession to the archbishopric of Canterbury of Thomas Arundel, the deposition of Richard II., and the accession of Henry IV., of the house of Lancaster (1399), led to the adoption of more rigorous measures. Archbishop Arundel was a violent opponent of the reform party, and from the beginning took the side of the house of Lancaster against Richard.

(2) *1399-1417* ...In 1400 an act was passed for the burning of Lollards, with full provisions for the arrest and trial of such. All unauthorized conventicles, schools, books, and preaching were to be suppressed. Under this legislation, together with other legislation in the same direction (1414), the inquisition of heresy was now pushed forward with vigor. Many Lollards were burned, especially preachers; the University of Oxford was harassed. Wycliffe's books were destroyed in large numbers....

(3) *after 1417*. After this time the party was driven into secrecy, and necessarily declined. From time to time Lollards were discovered, and numerous martyrdoms occurred. From 1431 onward the authorities seem to have thought that the heresy was utterly exterminated. Yet the Lollards persisted in considerable numbers till the Reformation.

(Newman 1 399-401)

§469 The work of the Lollards contributed greatly to the teaching of Wycliffe's ideas to Jan Hus.

Jan Hus (John Huss) 1367-1415 AD

Bohemia and the influence of Wycliffe:

§470 Christianity in Bohemia (part of the modern Czech Republic) was introduced by the Eastern church as early as 860 AD by missionaries Cyril and Methodius. Because of German influence, the country had shifted over to Roman Catholicism by 935 AD. During the centuries that followed, Bohemia was resistant to Roman Catholic dominance. In the late 1300s, strong evangelical preaching had taken root with characteristic condemnation of abuses by the clergy.

§471 The teachings of John Wycliffe had already made their way into the University of Prague by the end of the 14th century. Following the marriage of Anne, the daughter of Bohemian Charles IV, to Richard II of England in 1382, a significant exchange of ideas had taken root between the universities of Oxford and Prague. By the time Jan Hus stepped onto the public stage, the writings of Wycliffe were highly

regarded and formed a common topic of conversation. These writings had an immediate and substantial impact on Hus, greatly shaping his perspective.

The papal schism, with its competing claims to the papal office and the anathemas exchanged among the rival popes (p. 155), created a sense of turmoil and division within the Church's hierarchy. This dynamic had far-reaching implications for the broader religious landscape and the reform movements emerging during that time.

Jan Hus, and friends (Matthias of Janow, Jerome of Prague)

Matthias of Janow and Jan Hus were contemporaries who found inspiration in this chaotic environment. Matthias, a Czech priest and reformer, used the papal schism to question the legitimacy of the papacy itself. He believed that the division and discord within the highest ranks of the Church were signs of the Antichrist's influence, leading him to emphasize the need for reform and a return to authentic Christian values.

§472 Jan Hus also drew from the papal schism to fuel his reformist zeal. The existence of rival popes and their mutual anathemas of each other provided Hus with a powerful argument against the corruption and disunity within the Church. He seized upon this turmoil to amplify his critique of the papacy and its departure from the teachings of Christ. Hus's own ideas about reform and his calls for a more genuine expression of Christianity were reinforced by the fractured state of the papacy.

§473 Up to 1402 Huss had taken more interest in philosophy and scholastic theology than in evangelical work. He had studied the philosophical writings of Wycliffe, and had used them in his lectures.

§474 His duty as preacher to the people, and his sense of the responsibility of his position, led him to study the Scriptures as he had never done before. He came to feel that the great evils in the church had resulted largely from neglect of biblical study. About the same time he became acquainted with Wycliffe's theological works through Jerome of Prague, who had studied at Oxford, and who became even more zealous than Huss for reform.

§475 Huss soon won great reputation as a moral preacher. In 1405 he began to denounce the corruption of the clergy in the synods, in which he was supported by King Wacлав. By preaching against the clergy he made many enemies. His Bohemian patriotism and his zeal in defending Wycliffe and disseminating his views, made him odious to the Germans in the university.

§476 Huss was became dominant in the university due to Germans withdrawing. Due to the archbishop's jealousy and being rebuked by Huss, a bull was published forbidding preaching in private chapels and requiring the burning of Wycliffe's works. Huss, supported by the king and queen, the nobility and the university, continued to preach in the Bethlehem Chapel at the university and to write in defense of Wycliffe. The pope called for a crusade against the king which produced even greater zeal in Huss and Jerome. This led to the condemnation of Wycliffe's works at Rome and to the excommunication of Huss (1413).

§477 Huss now wrote his great work on the church, and retired from Prague. He was summoned to appear before the council of Constance (1414), and went under the safe-conduct of the Emperor Sigismund. He felt secure from the fact that he was not charged with heresy, and that the object of the council was reformation. On November 28, 1414, Huss was thrown into prison on a trumped up charge of heresy. Despite the

protest of the Prague University and the Bohemian nobles, the safe-conduct of the emperor was violated, and without the show of a fair trial, Huss was burned July, 1415.

The Hussite Wars

§478 The immediate effect of Huss's death was the Hussite Wars that ran from 1419-1436 AD. The Hussite Wars had a transformative effect on the Bohemian identity. The wars fostered a spirit of resistance, religious reform, and independence from the Roman Catholic Church's authority. The conflict had a long lasting effect into the 1600s.

The Unity of the Brethren, the Moravian Church

§479 The Unity of the Brethren, which later became the Moravian Church, emerged as a distinct community during the Hussite Wars in the 15th century. It was officially organized in the early 1450s as a Protestant movement that combined elements of Hussite ideals, evangelical theology, and emphasis on the authority of the Bible. The church emphasized simplicity in worship, communion in both elements (bread and wine), and communal living. The Moravian Church played a significant role in the history of the Bohemian Reformation and later influenced the broader Protestant Reformation.

The effect on Martin Luther

§480 Since Martin Luther (1483–1546) came so soon afterward, he was greatly influenced by the Bohemian events.

§481 Hus' stand on matters of conscience resonated with Luther's own beliefs, particularly his emphasis on *sola scriptura*, the idea that the Bible alone should be the basis for Christian doctrine. Hus's example of standing up for his convictions, even in the face of opposition from the Church, inspired Luther to assert his own theological insights.

§482 Both Hus and Luther criticized the corruption and abuses within the Catholic Church of their times. Hus's criticism of indulgences, simony, and the wealth of the clergy mirrored Luther's own grievances.

§483 The debates that proceeded influenced Luther's own thinking about the structure of the Church and the role of the pope. The Hussite emphasis on vernacular instead of Latin worship and preaching had an impact on the way Luther approached worship, making religious teachings more accessible to the common people.

• Magna Carta: In the meanwhile...over in Runnymede 1215 AD

§484 While all the power struggles were going on between kings, popes, and reformers, a seed was sown in England. Twenty miles southwest of London on the river Thames, King John sealed the Magna Carta, the Great Charter. The sealing of Magna Carta was a pivotal event that sought to restore the authority of the state in the people as it had anciently been. From the Norman Conquest (1066 AD) to Magna Carta (1215 AD), English government was influenced by the centralized European government in

a monarch. The centralized government with a ruler who possessed divine rights was especially influenced by Roman law and tradition.²⁰ Magna Carta reflected ancient English tradition that emphasized the authority of the law in constraining the power of the king, acknowledging that the king's authority should be subject to legal limitations. This marked a significant step in the development of constitutional governance in England. It strongly implied that the king's authority should be subject to legal constraints. This signified that the king was accountable under the law and not positioned above it.

§485 The concept of the king not having absolute power would feed the importance of individual liberty in later generations. It led to the English Civil War (1642-1646 AD), the Glorious Revolution (1688 AD) (p. 190), and the American Revolution (1775-1783 AD, p. 228). Although the English Civil War and the Glorious Revolution are unfamiliar to us, it was the same principle of popular governance²¹ and individual liberty that was also the inspiration for Magna Carta. Thomas Jefferson, among many others, would hearken back to the Magna Carta as justification for political reformation.

§486 The effect of Magna Carta was not fully realized in its day. It was the beginning of a chain of events that *would* be realized at the end of the next church age of Sardis (notice p. 21).

3. Challenges of the Age

§487 The source of the challenges faced in the Thyatira church age will continue to be from the political world within as the universal church becomes strengthened. Pagan theology will continue to become entrenched. The end of the age begins to be redeemed as the universal church suffers rot from within and a revival of rationality in the Renaissance.²²

• Bibliology

§488 The allegorical method of interpretation was the dominant method during this time. A reaction to a petrified dogma led to stultifying Scholasticism made the church ripe for Renaissance openness for study and honest examination.

• Theology Proper

• Pneumatology

§489 The Filioque Controversy centered around the insertion of the term

²⁰This was nothing new about kings in ancient societies. What was different about Roman government was that the Emperor worked in a state governed by Law. Other ancient societies utilized such things as royal decrees as part of their governance.

²¹Government determined by the people rather than an elite monarchy.

²²It is good to point out at this time that the Renaissance is different from the Enlightenment. The Renaissance was a revival of rationality while the Enlightenment was an ungodly exaggeration of rationality.

"filioque" (Latin for "and the Son") into the Nicene Creed. The original creed stated that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father, but in the Western (Latin) Church, the phrase was added to indicate that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son. This addition created tension and led to a major division between the Eastern and Western churches, contributing to the Great Schism between the Eastern Orthodox and the Roman Catholic Church in 1054 CE.

- **Christology**

§490 Iconoclasm: The Iconoclast Controversy, which emerged in the 8th and 9th centuries, focused on the use of religious icons or images in Christian worship. Iconoclasts, influenced by a strict interpretation of the Ten Commandments' prohibition of graven images, argued against the veneration of icons, asserting that it violated the purity of worship. Iconodules, on the other hand, defended the use of icons as aids to devotion and argued for their legitimacy. The controversy was ultimately settled in favor of the use of icons at the Second Council of Nicaea in 787 CE.

- **Anthropology**

- **Harmartiology**

§491 Augustine introduced the concept of *original guilt*, not just *original sin*, making the descendants of Adam guilty for what Adam did. This will affect the nature of salvation.

- **Soteriology**

§492 Augustine's introduction of the inability of man to respond to God (a Manichaeian concept) made way for teachings of election, predestination, and being born again before getting saved. The only practical impact of this teaching was that it justified infant baptism. A more traditional understanding of free will was active also.

- **Ecclesiology**

- Baptism**

§493 Council of Carthage (418 AD) affirmed infant baptism.

- Rise and fall of papal power**

§494 The papacy was strengthened only to have its power collapse upon itself. It would not be destroyed completely, however.

Ecclesiastical abuse

§495 The abuses of ecclesiastical power along with changing political dynamics led to a rise in dissatisfaction and reformation pressure.

Power

§496 "The Church" was by no means universal or under a central command. Although the popes would like to have thought they were a universal bishop, separatist churches and church movements were always cropping up. They were never completely eliminated.

• Eschatology

§497 With the corruption of the state church, calls were made that the Antichrist was at work.

VII . SARDIS 1500-1750

THE DEAD CHURCH

Rev 3:1-6 And unto the angel of the church in Sardis write; These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

2Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

3Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

4Thou hast a few names even in Sardis which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

5He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

6He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

§498 Jesus criticized this church for having made a name for itself as being alive but in reality was dead. This time period will be known for a reaffirmation of the supremacy of Scripture as the foundation of salvation by grace through faith (three of the "Five Solas" of the Reformation, p. 213), In spite of a departure from the Roman Catholic Church, the churches of this time period did not come out far enough, hence, its description of being dead. It got bogged down with its own inconsistencies due to an incomplete revival.

The Big Idea:

This age started with great promise but failed to completely reform and ended up getting bogged down with inconsistency

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Sardis

§499 The age of the Church of Sardis follows on the heels of the Renaissance and starts with the launch of the Reformation with the nailing of the *95 Theses* (p. 178) written by Martin Luther in 1517 AD. They were intended as propositions for scholarly debate. They criticized the sale of indulgences and questioned the authority of the Pope, emphasizing the importance of Scripture and faith as the means of salvation, which sparked the Protestant Reformation.

§500 The end of the age will occur with the *Great Awakening* (1740 AD) and the American Revolution (p. 224) which marks the beginning of the next church age. The combination of the principles of religious liberty espoused in the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights, the end of a state church, and the promotion of man's free will response to the Gospel will be the character of that next age.

2. Character of the Age

§501 The central power of not just a state church but an *empire* church was at its weakest point as this age was entered. It was ripe for a challenge. The monopoly on religion by the Catholic, universal church stifled religious thinking. The progress of spirituality that blossomed during the Reformation was a result of the diversity of thought in a free and open intellectual environment. However, because the Reformers still clung to the idea of a state church, the Reformation failed to reach its full potential for revival. The driving principle of this age will be the struggle towards pluralism. With freedom under pluralism, man is more responsible for himself before God. Key moments and development in history will reveal the advancement towards pluralism, but a fuller reading of this time period is available in Newman's *Manual of Church History*, vol. 2.

• Church Polity

§502 In the course of fracturing the power and authority of a centralized church state, how a church is to be governed will be a common issue. It will not have any great bearing on spirituality, but it *will* affect the power structures to determine who and how church affairs are administered. The types of polity

(how churches are governed) cover a range of how conducive they are to centralization.

§503 The closer the church is to the state or to a centralizing structure, the more critical this issue becomes. Baptist churches which are the most de-centralized free church relationship, might, at worst, choose not to associate with each other, but power and authority issues amongst Baptists are non-existent. Although a sister churches might not have exactly the same standards they will not be necessarily break fellowship with each other.

§504 The separation over church polity is consistent with the promotion of growing liberty which will be most completely realized after the American Revolutionary War (p. 228).

• Get Ready...Get Set...95 Theses

The Perfect Storm

§505 The *95 Theses* are widely recognized as the start of the Reformation even though the issues that were addressed and the debates and conflicts that followed were concerns that had been

The Big Idea:
Separation over church polity is consistent with the promotion of growing liberty.

The Big Idea:
The 95 Theses were not new, just perfectly timed.

contested for some time before. Along with the new political forces, the Reformation was different in character from the efforts that preceded in the previous age. There were factors that came together to form the *perfect storm*.

- The work of the pre-reformers: Starting with Wycliffe's (p. 167) judgment against the papacy, his translation of the Bible and preaching in the language of the people, the effect of his ministry passed on to the Lollards (p. 169) and their ministry to Huss (p. 170) who deeply affected Luther and other reformers.
- The Renaissance (p. 158): The *new learning* of the Renaissance contributed to a renewed examination of the Scriptures utilizing Greek and Hebrew instead of the Latin Vulgate, a translation of the Bible.
- Biblical study, a departure from Scholasticism (p. 156): Although the Scholastic method was an improvement over dependence on dogma and tradition, it became cumbersome and bogged down by appealing to every imaginable debate. Resorting to the actual text of the Scriptures opened up challenges to church practice and theology.
- A greatly weakened papacy: following the *Babylonian Captivity of the Papacy* (p. 153) and the *Papal Schism (Western Schism)*, (p. 155), kings in their various realms had greater power to protect the religious interests of their domains. A rise in national identity was beginning to take root.
- Advancement of communication (p. 160): the invention of the moveable type printing press accelerated the spread of communication, literature, and access to the Bible in the vernacular.

Indulgences and The Theses

§506 The 95 Theses most specifically were about Indulgences. This issue was at the forefront of the criticisms of all the reformers. The problem of Indulgences brought forward the question of forgiveness and salvation. They were not meant to be published for public consumption. When Martin Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg on October 31, 1517, his primary intention was to invite scholarly debate and discussion within the academic and ecclesiastical circles of his time. The Ninety-Five Theses were written in Latin and addressed to fellow theologians, and they were initially intended as propositions for academic disputation. Luther's Theses were soon copied and disseminated by his students and supporters, who recognized their significance. Luther may not have directly instructed them to do so, but he did not discourage their efforts to distribute his propositions more widely. Luther himself translated the Theses from Latin into German, making them accessible to a broader audience. With the advantage of the printing press and the vernacular, the theses "went viral." Because the nature of salvation was at stake, it led to the conclusion of justification by faith alone as the pre-eminent issue of the day.

Sample of the theses:

27. They preach only human doctrines who say that as soon as the money clinks into the money chest, the soul flies out of purgatory.
32. Those who believe that they can be certain of their salvation because they have indulgence letters will be eternally damned, together with their teachers.

36. Any truly repentant Christian has a right to full remission of penalty and guilt, even without indulgence letters.

43. Christians are to be taught that he who gives to the poor or lends to the needy does a better deed than he who buys indulgences.

52. It is vain to trust in salvation by indulgence letters, even though the indulgence commissary, or even the pope, were to offer his soul as security.

56. The true treasures of the church, out of which the pope distributes indulgences, are not sufficiently discussed or known among the people of Christ.

§507 Here, Luther is referring to the "treasury of merit," the merits or good deeds of Christ, the Virgin Mary, and the saints that are seen as a spiritual treasury or storehouse of grace. According to Catholic doctrine, these merits, earned through the righteousness of Christ and the saints, can be applied to the benefit of the faithful through various means, including the granting of indulgences. In essence, Catholics believe that these merits can be shared with the faithful to help remit the temporal punishment for sins.

82. ...Why does not the pope empty purgatory for the sake of holy love and the dire need of the souls that are there if he redeems an infinite number of souls for the sake of miserable money with which to build a church?...

– luther.de/en/95thesen.html

The Early Reformers

Desiderius Erasmus 1466-1536	Martin Luther 1483-1546	Ulrich Zwingli 1484-1531	John Calvin 1509-1564
October 27, 1466: Born in Rotterdam, Netherlands.	November 10, 1483: Born, Eisleben, Germany		
1487: Attends school in a nearby monastery and later attends a Latin school in Utrecht.		January 1, 1484: Born Wildhaus, Toggenburg region of Switzerland.	
1495: Enters the Augustinian monastery of Steyn near Gouda.			
1499: Ordained as a Catholic priest but never becomes a practicing clergyman.		1498: Received Humanist education at the University of Vienna.	
	1501: Studies Law at the University of Erfurt.		
	1505: Enters the Augustinian Monastery in Erfurt after terrifying experience.	1504: Earned Bachelor of Arts degree at University of Basel.	
1506: Travels to England, where he becomes acquainted with leading humanist scholars, including Thomas More.		1506: Received Masters Degree and ordination as a Roman Catholic priest and began his pastoral career.	
	1507: Ordained as a Catholic priest.		
1509: Publishes the first edition of his "Adagia," a collection of proverbs and sayings from classical literature, which becomes one of his most famous works and is a reflection of the impact of humanism (p. 158).			July 10, 1509: born in Noyon, Picardy, France.
	1510: Witnesses the corruption of Rome on a trip he hoped would help him get spiritual clarity. This heavily contributes to his condemnation of Romanism later.		
	1512: Luther receives his Doctor of Theology degree from the University of Wittenberg and becomes a professor there.		
1516: Erasmus publishes his critical edition of the Greek New Testament, which would have a profound impact on biblical scholarship and later translations of the Bible.	1513-1516: Lecturing on the Psalms and Romans, Luther begins to come to the light. Utilized Erasmus' Greek New Testament.		

1517: Reacted cautiously to the 95 Theses.

"I have heard that Luther is stirring up many things. This man certainly has a very keen and powerful spirit. I am only afraid that there is not sufficient discretion there. I pray that God may either inspire him with a better spirit or, if it is His will, give the Church the spirit to bear with this spirit; for he has in him a great desire to benefit the Church." Erasmus opposed Luther, although he appreciated him.

1520s Letters encouraging caution to focus on moderation and reform, not to break from the Catholic Church.

1519-1521: Publishes his *Colloquia*, a collection of dialogues that satirize various aspects of society and the Church. These works were both humorous and critical of the religious practices of the time.

1522: Erasmus publishes *De libero arbitrio diatribe sive collatio* (A Discussion or Collation on Free Will), a work in which he debates the question of human free will and predestination. He was bothered by the strife between Zwingli, Luther, and the Anabaptists.

Publishes *The Praise of Folly* (*Encomium Moriae*), a satirical work that criticized the Church and society. This work became one of his most famous and controversial.

1525 Debate with Luther on predestination and the freedom of the will. This became their sharpest

October 31, 1517: Luther posts his famous 95 Theses on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, sparking the beginning of the Protestant Reformation.

1518: Commonly understood time when Luther was definitely saved.

1521: Excommunication by Pope Leo X. He also stands trial at the Diet of Worms, where he refuses to recant his teachings, famously saying, "Here I stand, I can do no other." He further condemned Henry VIII.

1525: Luther marries Katharina von Bora, a former nun, breaking the vow of celibacy and setting an example for Protestant clergy to marry. Wrote "On the Bondage of the Will" (*De*

1519: Became the people's priest at the Grossmünster in Zurich, a significant church in Switzerland.

1520: Zwingli began to openly preach against various practices of the Roman Catholic Church and called for reform within the church.

1522: With his supporters initiated the removal of religious images and icons from churches in Zurich, marking a break with traditional Catholic practices.

1523: Published a collection of 67 articles outlining his reform program, known as the *Sixty-Seven Articles* which sparked the The Zurich Disputation. Zwingli debated with Catholic theologians.

1525: Zwingli debates Karlstadt regarding baptism. He agrees on various points such as no Biblical basis for infant baptism but opts for a covenantal position for infant baptism

1520: Studied theology, law, and the humanities at various institutions, including the University of Paris, where he was exposed to Renaissance humanism and Reformation ideas.

SARDIS 1500-1750 – CHARACTER OF THE AGE, 95 THESES

<p>division, though they maintained a relationship.</p>	<p><i>Servo Arbitrio</i>).</p> <p>1529: Meeting at the Marburg Colloquy. The Lutherans held to the <i>real presence of Christ</i> in communion</p> <p>1530-1555: Events leading up to the <i>Peace of Augsburg</i> (p. 183)</p> <p>1534: Completes the translation of the New Testament into German, making the Bible more accessible to the common people.</p>	<p>1526: Zurich authorities issued a mandate requiring the celebration of the new communion service and banning the traditional Mass.</p> <p>1529: Meeting at the Marburg Colloquy. The Reformed leaders held to a <i>memorial view of Christ</i> in communion.</p> <p>1531-1533: The Second War of Kappel took place, resulting in a peace treaty between Catholic and Protestant cantons in Switzerland. October 11, 1531 - Zwingli died in the Battle of Kappel. This resulted in two treaties, the First and Second Religious Peace of Kappel, which allowed each canton to determine its own religious affiliation, effectively recognizing the split between Catholicism and Protestantism in Switzerland.</p>	<p>1530s: Religious conversion and embraced Protestantism, particularly the Reformed tradition.</p>
<p>1536: Desiderius Erasmus dies on July 12, 1536, in Basel, Switzerland.</p>	<p>1546: Martin Luther dies on February 18 in Eisleben, his place of birth.</p>	<p>1536: Published the first edition of his <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i>, which became one of the foundational texts of Reformed theology. Forced to flee France, settled in Basel, Switzerland. Passing through Geneva he was persuaded to stay and help with the Reformation there.</p> <p>1538: Strict approach to religious reform led to tensions in Geneva, and exile. He spent served several years in Strasbourg.</p> <p>1541: Returned to Geneva where he played a leading role in shaping the city's religious and civic life. He established a theocratic government and promoted Reformed theology.</p> <p>1553-1558: Influence on Puritan leaders and John Knox during the reign of Bloody Mary</p> <p>1559: Created the Academy of Geneva (now the University of Geneva) with Theodore Beza</p> <p>May 27, 1564: John Calvin dies in Geneva, Switzerland.</p>	

The Peace of Augsburg, Thirty Years War, and the Peace of Westphalia

Peace of Augsburg (1555)

§508 The Peace of Augsburg, signed in 1555, marked an important step in addressing religious tensions and a step in pluralism. It allowed each ruler within the Holy Roman Empire to choose the religion (Catholicism or Lutheranism) for their territory, following the principle *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose realm, his religion).

- 1530: Diet of Augsburg - Lutheran princes present the Augsburg Confession, a statement of their religious beliefs, seeking a peaceful resolution to the religious conflicts.
- 1531: The Schmalkaldic League is formed, a defensive alliance of Lutheran princes in opposition to the Holy Roman Empire's attempts to suppress Lutheranism.
- 1532: Peace of Nuremberg - A temporary agreement that allows Lutheran states to practice their faith without persecution.
- 1547: Schmalkaldic War - Armed conflict breaks out between the Schmalkaldic League (Lutherans) and the forces of Charles V, resulting in the defeat of the League and the capture of its leaders.
- 1552: Treaty of Passau - A temporary peace agreement that grants religious freedom to Lutherans until a more permanent solution can be reached.
- 1555: Peace of Augsburg - Finally signed, this treaty officially recognizes Lutheranism alongside Catholicism in the Holy Roman Empire. It establishes the principle of *cuius regio, eius religio*, allowing each prince to choose the religion of their territory.

Thirty Years' War (1618-1648)

§509 The Peace of Augsburg did not fully resolve religious conflicts, and the Holy Roman Empire (p. 144) was further divided by the outbreak of the Thirty Years' War. It had allowed for Catholicism or Lutheranism, but it did not accommodate Calvinism and other Protestant sects.

§510 European powers, including France, Sweden, and Spain, saw the conflict as an opportunity to advance their political interests within the Holy Roman Empire and sought to exploit its internal divisions.

The Thirty Years War was fought in various phases:

- Bohemian Phase (1618-1625): The war began in Bohemia when the Protestant nobility rebelled against the Catholic Habsburg Emperor Ferdinand II. The Battle of White Mountain in 1620 marked a significant Catholic victory.
- Danish Phase (1625-1629): Denmark intervened on the Protestant side, leading to the Danish phase of the war. However, Danish forces were defeated, and the Peace of Lübeck in 1629 reaffirmed Catholic dominance.
- Swedish Phase (1630-1635): Sweden, led by King Gustavus Adolphus, entered the war on the Protestant side. The Swedish phase saw a shift in the balance of power, with Swedish successes in northern and central Europe.
- Swedish-French Phase (1635-1648): France, led by Cardinal Richelieu, joined the

conflict on the Protestant side, primarily to weaken the Habsburgs. The war expanded beyond the Holy Roman Empire, with battles fought in France and the Low Countries.

Peace of Westphalia (1648)

§511 The Peace of Westphalia, which concluded the Thirty Years' War, solidified the recognition of multiple Protestant denominations, including Lutheranism and Calvinism, alongside Catholicism. It reaffirmed the principle of religious toleration within the Holy Roman Empire.

- The Peace of Westphalia recognized the coexistence of multiple Christian denominations, including Catholics, Lutherans, and Calvinists, and granted them legal status.
- The treaty redrew the political map of Europe, resulting in territorial gains and losses for various states. The Netherlands and Switzerland gained independence from the Holy Roman Empire.
- The Holy Roman Empire emerged from the war weakened and fragmented, with greater autonomy granted to individual states.
- The Peace of Westphalia effectively ended the Thirty Years' War and marked the beginning of a new era of state sovereignty and international diplomacy in Europe.

Pietism

§512 After the Thirty Years War and the Peace of Westphalia, Lutheranism threatened to be splintered over theological disputes. Thirty-two years after the Peace of Westphalia, the Formula of Concord (1580) formalized Lutheran doctrine. With the devastating affect of the war and theological infighting, the spiritual condition of Germany had significantly deteriorated. The Formula of Concord had only reinforced a stagnant orthodoxy.

The Big Idea:
Pietism with an emotional emphasis grew in reaction to the deadening creedalism of Lutheran Germany serving liberal Rationalism to come

§513 Germany entered a time of deep spiritual crisis. It was marked by widespread religious apathy, moral decay in universities, a lack of inspiring sermons, and a dearth of mechanisms to revitalize spiritual life. In 1666, Philipp Spener embarked on a reformatory mission. His aim was to rejuvenate religious life and awaken a fervent faith.

§514 During this period, there was a prevailing belief that infant baptism held a sort of magical power to secure salvation, and even the most morally compromised individuals were thought to receive divine grace through the partaking of the Eucharist.

§515 In contrast, in the Protestant Netherlands, England, and Scotland, more zealous forms of Christian life were emerging and spreading. Groups like the Puritans, Independents, and Baptists were gaining prominence and fostering spiritual growth.

These regions saw the continued influence of the Anabaptist movement, whereas in Germany, such spiritual forces had been suppressed. The contributions of certain mystical preachers and societies often leaned toward skepticism and unbelief rather than the advancement of pure religion.

§516 Pietism placed significant emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit as the renewing and enlightening force in the life of every Christian. They placed devout focus on the study of the Bible. A core tenet of Pietism was the idea of ongoing sanctification through the abiding presence of the Spirit, which continued to shape the believer's life throughout their journey.

§517 An emphasis on the emotional aspect of Christian experience was not conducive to strong doctrinal stands, which also left Pietism open to attacks based on Rationalism (p. 249).

• The English Reformation

§518 It may not be entirely fitting to label the transformation of religion in England as part of the *Reformation* in the traditional sense because its primary motivations were not purely spiritual. Where the Reformation on the European continent was first by spiritual conviction, the English Reformation was first by political convenience. This historical period is often referred to as the *English Reformation and Tudor State* because it was largely

driven by the political maneuvers of King Henry VIII of the Tudor dynasty. Over the course of the next two centuries, various factions emerged as they sought to influence the direction of the Church. These included Anglicans, Presbyterians, Puritans, and Baptists.

§519 While there was *political* pressure for a centralized, state endorsed and supported church, there was also a spiritual effort of reform and pressure for churches to break out. The state Anglican Church (p. ?) leaders and clergy emphasized liturgy. Presbyterians (p. ?) were mixed with an emphasis on reformation along Presbyterian lines in the state church but also argued for a free church. Puritans (p. 186) acted to reform the Anglican Church from within, but also were very active as separatists forming mostly Congregationalist churches (p. ?). Baptists (p. 203) did what they always did and maintained separate churches. Much of the church and state conflicts were driven by suspicion of attempts to re-establish Catholicism. Those who promoted non-Calvinistic free will were suspected of promoting Catholicism.

§520 When the Puritans *were* able to achieve a spiritual reformation by political means in the English Civil War, the spiritual effect was just as quickly lost when their political position changed. This will be another affirmation that the church might be *in* the world but should not be *of* the world.

The Big Idea:
True liberty and freedom of religion came by way of the English Reformation as the English heritage of government of the people matured and became part of the American Revolution.

§521 The way to understand the progress of the English Reformation will be as the Puritans interacted with the political process.

The Puritans

§522 In the course of adjusting to Anglicanism, godly efforts sought to reform and purify the Church of England. The term Puritans first began to emerge during the latter part of the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603).

§523 Critics of the Puritans often used the term in a pejorative manner to characterize them as overly strict and critical of established religious practices. The label highlighted their desire to "purify" the Church of England from what they saw as Roman Catholic influences that had persisted.

§524 Puritans referred to themselves as "Nonconformists" or "Separatists" if they chose to separate from the Church of England altogether.

§525 While they shared some common concerns about reforming the Church of England and reducing what they considered to be remnants of Roman Catholic practices, Puritanism encompassed a varied range of perspectives and beliefs.

- **Doctrinal Differences:** While many adhered to Calvinist theology, there were differences in their interpretations of Calvinism, particularly on issues like predestination and the nature of the sacraments.
- **Liturgical Practices:** Some advocated for a simpler, more stripped-down form of worship, while others sought to retain some traditional liturgical elements.
- **Church Government:** Puritans had different views on church government. Some preferred a Presbyterian system of church governance, while others were more congregationalist in their approach, emphasizing the autonomy of individual congregations.
- **Attitudes Toward the Church of England:** Some Puritans believed in reforming the Church of England from within, while others believed it was irredeemably corrupt and chose to separate from it.
- **Social and Political Views:** Puritans held various social and political views, which influenced their approach to issues like civil government, education, and social reform.
- **Attitudes Toward Religious Tolerance:** While some Puritans advocated for religious tolerance based on their own experiences of persecution, others could be intolerant of religious practices that deviated from their own beliefs.

Puritan Influence

Henry VIII (1509-1547)

The Big Idea:

The advancement of the concepts of –

(1) A limited government according to the consent of the people.

(2) The role of government not over the church, but protecting the freedom of religion.

§526 1521 - To secure political favor with Rome, Henry wrote *Defense of the Seven Sacraments*

§527 **1532 - Establishment of the Church of England** over the issue of divorce from Catharine of Aragon. Parliament supported Henry by making it illegal to appeal to the Pope on matters related to marriage. **1534 - Parliament declared Henry VIII as the *Supreme Head of the Church of England***. From 1536-1540, Henry dissolved the monasteries and religious houses in England, appropriating their wealth and property. This period is known as the Dissolution of the Monasteries.

§528 The Council of Trent (1545-1563, p. 196) responded to the Protestant Reformation at this time, although it was not prompted by Henry.

Edward VI (1547-1553)

§529 Edward's reign was characterized by **the advancement of Protestantism** in England. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer created a **Protestant themed Book of Common Prayer** (1549 AD) and sermons for use in the Anglican Church liturgy.

Mary I (1553-1558)

§530 Mary, also known as "Bloody Mary," was the daughter of Henry VIII and Catherine of Aragon. Her reign saw a **reversal of the Protestant reforms** of her predecessors, and she **sought to return England to Roman Catholicism**, leading to the persecution of **Protestants, many of whom fled to Geneva and were influenced by John Calvin (p. 180)**.

Elizabeth I (1558-1603)

§531 Elizabeth was the daughter of Henry VIII and Anne Boleyn. Her reign is often referred to as the Elizabethan era and is known for its stability, expansion, and the flourishing of English literature and culture. Elizabeth I **established the Elizabethan Religious Settlement, which sought to find a middle ground between Catholicism and Protestantism. Puritans started to come back, but were unhappy with the reforms.**

§532 Some Puritans became separatists, believing that the Church of England could not be reformed from within. They formed independent congregations and sought religious freedom outside of the established church. The Pilgrims, who settled in Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620

James I (1603-1625)

§533 James I of England (also known as James VI of Scotland) succeeded Elizabeth I and was the first monarch of the Stuart dynasty. It was his reign that **saw the development of the King James Version of the Bible (p. 195) and continued tensions between the monarchy and Parliament. He defended absolute monarchy and the idea that kings were God's representatives on Earth.** He sought spiritual cooperation but had to deal with religious extremism.

§534 The Hampton Court Conference in 1604 highlighted the tensions. While

some Puritans hoped for further reforms, James I was more inclined to uphold the authority of the established Church of England. It was at this conference that the decision was made to produce the King James Version.

Charles I (1625-1649)

§535 Charles I, the son of James I, was **beheaded over the conflict between Parliament and the Crown. This led to further development of government by consent of the people which would become the cornerstone of American government. He was seen as being soft on Catholicism because of his promotion of free will and denial of predestination.** 10,000 Puritans will leave during his reign to New England establishing the Massachusetts Bay Colony and a theocracy in the new world.

§536 His support for High Church Anglicanism and his perceived closeness to Catholicism, created controversy and tensions with Parliament and Puritans in England during his reign.

§537 **Archbishop William Laud, who served as Archbishop of Canterbury from 1633 to 1645, played a pivotal role in promoting Arminianism (p. 214) within the Church of England.** He appointed Arminian-leaning clergy to key positions within the Church hierarchy. These appointments allowed Arminian ideas to gain prominence within the Church's leadership and institutions. Arminianism, with its emphasis on a more liturgical and hierarchical form of worship, was seen as a counterbalance to Puritanism and was therefore encouraged by the authorities.

§538 **As the English Civil War unfolded, Laud was impeached by Parliament in 1640 on charges of promoting "popery" and subverting the Church of England.** He was imprisoned in the Tower of London, and his trial began in 1643. **He was found guilty of various charges, including promoting Roman Catholic practices and attempting to establish an absolute monarchy. On January 10, 1645, William Laud was executed by beheading, making him one of the few archbishops in English history to meet such a fate.**

English Civil War (1642-1649) and the Interregnum (1649-1660)

§539 The Interregnum, also known as the Commonwealth of England, was a period without a monarch. It was led by Oliver Cromwell and the **Commonwealth government** following the execution of Charles I. The effect of **Puritanism was at its highest point at this time.**

§540 The English Civil War was fought in two phases (1642-1646, 1648). The American Revolution is referred to as the *Second English Civil War* because similar issues were at stake concerning the rights of the governed to establish government. While the *First English Civil War* led to the Interregnum, constitutional experimentation, and the temporary abolition of the monarchy, the American Revolution led to a true constitutional republic.

§541 The Protestant Oliver Cromwell became the Lord Protector of England who gave more respect to the Parliament, though it went through various phases. He ultimately established the *Instrument of Government* (1653) defining his powers and relationship with Parliament, but he dismissed it due to an immature system of checks

and balances. The term for the Lord Protector was to be five years after which Parliament would decide to reappoint or not. It was a moot point since Cromwell lived for only five years more.

§542 The centralization of power seemed to work, but its functioning depended more on the personal force of Cromwell. This became apparent as his son succeeded him but did not have the same force and skill as his father. This would lead to the Restoration of the Crown in Charles II.

§543 The Puritans implemented a more austere and reformed religious practice during this period. **During this time the Westminster Confession of Faith (1643-1649, p. 192) was created with reformed and Presbyterian influence which had the intention of replacing the Book of Common Prayer and form a new charter for the Anglican Church (p. ?).** This would not be adopted, though it has been a standard confession in Presbyterian churches.

Charles II (1660-1685)

§544 Charles II, the son of Charles I, became king. His reign was known as the Restoration and saw the return of the monarchy, the Church of England, and a degree of political stability. Despite his belief in divine right, Charles II **accepted constitutional limitations on his power, which provided another advancement towards constitutional government in America and freedom of religion.** Nevertheless, measures were taken to curb the power of the Puritans.

- The Savoy Conference 1661: This conference brought together Anglican bishops, clergy, and some Puritan representatives to address issues related to the Book of Common Prayer and other matters of worship and church governance. However, **many Puritan representatives, including some who had participated in the earlier Westminster Assembly (1643-1653) and had helped draft the Westminster Confession of Faith (p. 192) and other documents, were not invited to the Savoy Conference.** This exclusion was intentional and reflected the desire of the Church of England to maintain a more traditional Anglican approach to worship and governance, rather than accommodating the Puritan perspective.
- Act of Uniformity 1662: **The Act of Uniformity 1662 required all clergymen to use the Book of Common Prayer in their services and conform to the liturgical practices of the Church of England. Clergy who refused to comply with these requirements were ejected from their positions. This act led to the "Great Ejection" of 2,400 Puritan and nonconformist ministers from the Church of England. By 1670, another 20,000 will have emigrated to Massachusetts.**
- Conventicle Acts (1664 and 1670): **The Conventicle Acts targeted religious gatherings held outside the Church of England. These acts prohibited**

The Big Idea:

These measures are a testament to the pressure to maintain a centralized church

- non-Anglican religious assemblies of more than five people.** Penalties for violating these acts included fines and imprisonment.
- The Five-Mile Act (1665): **The Five-Mile Act prevented nonconformist ministers who had been ejected from their pulpits from residing within five miles of any incorporated town or parish.** This act aimed to limit the influence and reach of nonconformist preachers.
 - The Test Acts (1673 and 1678): **The Test Acts required individuals holding public office or military commissions to take Anglican sacraments and renounce certain aspects of their nonconformist beliefs. These acts effectively excluded non-Anglicans from public positions.**
 - Declaration of Indulgence (1672): Although this was a temporary measure issued by Charles II in an attempt to grant religious toleration to dissenters, it was not well-received by Parliament or the Anglican Church. The Declaration of Indulgence was eventually withdrawn due to political opposition.
 - Appointment of Arminian Bishops: **Charles II appointed bishops who held Arminian theological views to key positions within the Church of England. One notable example is Gilbert Sheldon, who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1663. Sheldon and other like-minded bishops actively promoted Arminianism (p. 214) .**

James II (1685-1688)

§545 James II succeeded his brother, Charles II, but his conversion to Catholicism and **fear that he would bring about a return to Catholicism for England led to the Glorious Revolution of 1688 (p. 190).** He was the last Catholic King of England.

The Glorious Revolution

§546 After the failed reign of Charles I, the Interregnum, and the soft approach of Charles II towards Catholicism, the Catholic convert James II became king. The fear of any attempt to bring Catholicism back to England along with abuse of power caused people to seek the intervention of his Protestant son-in-law and daughter, the Dutch William of Orange and Mary. William landed in England in November 1688 with an army, leading to what became known as the Glorious Revolution.

§547 William's forces encountered relatively little resistance, as many of James II's own troops and officials defected to his side. James II attempted to resist but eventually fled to France, leading to his deposition.

William III and Mary II (1689-1702)

§548 William of Orange and his wife Mary, James II's daughter, jointly ruled as a result of the

The Big Idea:
The establishment of a *constitutional* monarchy and the English Bill of Rights was a critical step towards liberty and personal responsibility, even though it was not complete.

Glorious Revolution and **a constitutional monarchy. This was another step towards governing by consent of the people.** This was reflected in the English Bill of Rights (1689) which laid the foundation for a constitutional monarchy. It affirmed Protestantism as the official religion of England. It firmly curbed the power of the king making it illegal for the Crown to suspend or dispense with the law, to levy money without parliamentary assent, or to raise an army in peacetime, and insisted on due process in criminal trials. The abrogation of these rights will play a critical part in the basis of colonial America's discontent and complaints.

Although Anglicanism was firmly established, other churches were allowed to exist, though without state support. With the Protestant succession secured, there was less incentive for the Anglican establishment to persecute dissenting Protestants and Puritans. While some Puritans and non-conformists welcomed the increased religious toleration following the Glorious Revolution, others remained dissatisfied with the compromises of the Toleration Act.

- Limited Religious Freedom: While the Toleration Act granted freedom of worship to non-conformist Protestant groups, it did not grant them full religious equality. **The Act still required ministers and preachers to subscribe to certain doctrinal beliefs, excluding Unitarians, Socinians, and Catholics, among others.**
- Exclusion of Catholics: The Toleration Act did not extend religious freedom to Catholics. They continued to face significant legal restrictions and discrimination, which was a source of contention for those advocating broader religious tolerance.
- Limitations on Public Office: **The act allowed non-conformists to worship freely but did not remove restrictions on holding public office.** The Test Act of 1673, which required public officials to take oaths of loyalty to the Church of England, remained in place. Some non-conformists desired full civil and political rights, including eligibility for public office, without religious restrictions.
- Oaths of Allegiance: Some non-conformists had objections to taking oaths, as oaths were often seen as religious commitments. **The act required some non-conformists to take oaths of allegiance to the Protestant monarchy, which was a source of discomfort for those who believed oaths were contrary to their religious principles.**
- Church Licensing and Registration: **The Toleration Act required non-conformist meeting houses to be licensed and registered. While this was a necessary condition for legal worship, it still imposed some level of state control and oversight over religious gatherings.**
- By 1690, emigration will have dropped off.

The Westminster Confession 1643-1648

§549 In 1643, the English Parliament became increasingly concerned about the state of the Church of England and the need for theological and liturgical reforms. They convened the Westminster Assembly composed only of Puritan theologians, ministers, and scholars, both from England and Scotland, who were tasked with reviewing and reforming the doctrine, worship, government, and discipline of the Church of England.

§550 The Westminster Assembly's work did not seek to replace the entire Anglican Book of Common Prayer but did aim to reform certain elements of it. The

assembly recommended changes to the liturgy and worship practices, seeking to make them more consistent with Reformed theology.

§551 The doctrinal standards produced by the Westminster Assembly were formally adopted by the English Parliament in 1648 and became known as the "Westminster Standards." Many Anglican clergy and bishops opposed the reforms.

§552 The Westminster Confession of Faith and the other documents produced by the Westminster Assembly were rejected and marginalized by the restored Anglican establishment under Charles II. The Act of Uniformity and other measures aimed at reestablishing traditional Anglicanism had a significant impact on religious conformity in England, and those who adhered to the Westminster Standards faced various forms of persecution and exclusion.

§553 The Westminster Confession has continued to be widely used by Presbyterians and others, however, outside of the Anglican Church.

• **Scotland, the Presbyterians, and John Knox**

§554 The reformation as it moved into Scotland is significant for this study as it explains yet another modern denomination of churches in the establishment of Presbyterian churches.

§555 John Knox was born around 1514, near the beginning of the reformation, in Haddington, Scotland. In the 1540's he became a Catholic priest and a tutor in Scotland. By 1547, Scottish Protestantism gained momentum influencing Knox. He may have been ordained as a Protestant minister during this period. Knox was taken captive by French forces and served as a galley slave on a French warship, released after 19 months, and returned to England where he became a preacher in the Church of England.

§556 In 1553, on the ascension of Catholic Queen Mary I, Knox fled to the European continent with many others to avoid persecution. He arrived in Geneva in 1554, where he met John Calvin and was influenced by Reformed theology and ideas about church governance.

§557 In 1559 Knox returned to Scotland, where he became a prominent leader of the Scottish Reformation. He preached against Catholic practices, and his fiery sermons rallied the Protestant cause. In 1560 the Scottish Parliament adopted the Scottish Confession of Faith, a Reformed statement of faith largely influenced by Knox's ideas. This marks a significant step toward the establishment of Protestantism in Scotland.

§558 Knox was critical of the hierarchical structure of the Roman Catholic Church, which included bishops with significant centralized authority. He saw this structure as being prone to corruption and abuse. Knox believed that Presbyterianism provided a more decentralized and accountable system of church government. He chose Presbyterianism over other forms of church government, including the more episcopal structure favored by the Reformed Church (p. 177) because he believed it was more in line with the New Testament model of church governance.

The Big Idea:
Yet another denomination that has continued to our day.

§559 In the Scottish context, Presbyterianism had significant appeal. The decentralized nature of a Presbyterian system allowed for greater local control and involvement in the church. This appealed to the Scottish nobility and laity who wanted to assert their independence from the English crown and maintain control over church affairs in Scotland.

• The Translation of the Bible

The Tyndale Bible

§560 William Tyndale (1494-1536 AD) was a scholar and exceptional linguist who became heavily involved early in his translation of Scripture. Tyndale had an argument with a "learned but blasphemous clergyman", who allegedly asserted: "We had better be without God's laws than the Pope's", to which Tyndale responded: "I defy the Pope and all his laws; and if God spares my life, ere many years, I will cause the boy that driveth the plow to know more of the Scriptures than thou dost!"

The Big Idea:
Translation from Hebrew and Greek is firmly established setting the stage for the King James Version.

§561 The effect of the Wycliffe Bible (p. 169) had been felt across Europe and served as an inspiration for other translation efforts. Across the centuries, translation work had been undertaken but had not been widely associated with efforts of Reformation. Starting with the Tyndale Bible, the printing press, and the Renaissance, Bible translation became multiplied and relied heavily on Greek and Hebrew. Because of the popularity of Wycliffe's Bible, in 1408, at the Convocation of Oxford, church authorities under the leadership of Archbishop Thomas Arundel had issued a set of Constitutions that prohibited the translation of the Bible into the vernacular (the common language of the people) without the permission of church authorities.

§562 The Tyndale Bible was the first translation to utilize Greek and Hebrew (1525-1534). It was done so well that it was also heavily used in other translation efforts. It has been said that Tyndale's words account for 84% of the New Testament and for 75.8% of the Old Testament books that he translated.

The Tyndale Bible was banned by the Catholic church. The ban was supported by Henry the VIII. Tyndale's final words, spoken "at the stake with a fervent zeal, and a loud voice", were reported later as "Lord! Open the King of England's eyes."

§563 Hypocritically, when Henry wanted to break from the Catholic church in 1534, his attitude toward the Bible needed to change. After Tyndale was condemned and martyred in 1536, Henry gave permission in 1538 (though not by decree) for the Great Bible to be published (1539) as a move to establish an Anglican Church identity.

The Bibles that followed included:

(Bibles below in bold font utilized the Greek and Hebrew)

English translations

- **The Tyndale Bible** (1525-1526): This translation of the New Testament into English was one of the first English translations directly from the original Greek text, and it was a landmark in the history of English Bible translation. Tyndale's work on translating the Old Testament books into English was ongoing but was not completed before his death.
- **Coverdale Bible** (1535): Influenced by Martin Luther's translations, also used the Latin Vulgate as one of its sources, especially for the Old Testament books that were not yet available in English.
- **Matthew Bible** (1537): Relied on portions of Tyndale's translations for the New Testament and Coverdale's work for the Old Testament. Coverdale's Old Testament, in turn, had some influence from the Latin Vulgate.
- **Great Bible** (1539): Authorized for use in the Church of England, was a revision of Coverdale's Bible and retained some reliance on the Latin Vulgate for the Old Testament.
- **Geneva Bible** (1560): Known for its reliance on the original Hebrew and Greek texts, but it also consulted the Latin Vulgate and other translations in certain places, and its preparation of study notes and commentary.
- **Bishop's Bible** (1568): The Bishop's Bible was intended as a revision of the Great Bible and also incorporated elements from the Latin Vulgate, along with other sources.
- **Douay-Rheims Bible** (1582 New Testament, 1609-1610 Old Testament): A translation of the Latin Vulgate into English for the Catholic Church. It was the standard Catholic English translation for many years.

Non-English translations

- **Martin Luther's German Bible** (New Testament in 1522, Complete Bible in 1534): New Testament published in 1522 and the complete Bible in 1534. Luther emphasized the use of the original Greek for the New Testament.
- **Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples' French Bible** (1523): Lefèvre's French translation of the New Testament was completed in 1523 and relied on the Latin Vulgate due to limited access to the Greek text.
- **Juan Pérez de Pineda's Spanish Bible** (1556): Drew from both the Latin Vulgate and the Greek text.
- **Casper Ulenberg's Dutch Bible** (1599): The Statenvertaling (State Translation) aimed to use the original languages, including the Greek New Testament, as primary sources.
- **Giovanni Diodati's Italian Bible** (1607): Used the original languages, Hebrew and Greek, as primary sources, with reference to the Latin Vulgate and other translations when necessary.
- **The Czech Bible of Kralice** (1579-1593): Often associated with the Unity of the Brethren (Unitas Fratrum or Moravian Church). This translation project aimed to provide a complete Bible in Czech based on the original languages, including the Greek New Testament and the Hebrew Old Testament.

§564 Jerome's Latin Vulgate (382-405 AD) was inferior as a translation. It included the Apocrypha, but Jerome, himself, had objected to its inclusion. Because of the Renaissance influence, the Greek New Testament Scriptures provided superior translations in this age.

The King James Bible

§565 The Great Bible that had been produced during the reign of Henry VIII and the Bishop's Bible during the reign of Queen Elizabeth that replaced it had not gained sufficient popularity to be accepted as a standard in their time.

§566 The Great Bible was quite large and heavy due to its size (approximately 14 inches tall), which made it impractical for many people to use. It was often displayed in churches for public reading but was not a convenient personal Bible. Personal copies were not widely available. While the Great Bible was an important step in providing an English translation of the Bible, some critics found its language and style to be somewhat archaic and less elegant compared to later translations. Some theologians and reformers of the time believed that the Great Bible did not go far enough in aligning with their reformist beliefs. They desired a more thorough reform of the liturgy and church practices, including changes to the English Bible translation.

§567 The Bishop's Bible was distinguished as a translation supported and promoted by the bishops, aligning it with the religious establishment of the time and consistent with the doctrines and practices of the Church of England during the English Reformation. It had issues with consistency in translation quality. It was produced by multiple translators, and the quality of the translation varied from one book or section to another. Despite being authorized for use in the Church of England, It did not gain widespread adoption among the clergy and laity. Many continued to use the Geneva Bible, which was more popular due to its annotations and commentary, even though they did not align with the Anglican Church's teachings. The Bishop's Bible was criticized for trying to be theologically neutral, which was seen by some as an attempt to avoid conflict between different theological factions within the Church of England. Critics argued that this neutrality led to a lack of clear doctrinal guidance in the translation.

§568 Because of the rising power of the Puritans, the Geneva Bible was gaining popularity in English, but not with James I. The notes and the translation of certain words reflected Presbyterian, non-Church of England, issues. The notes also were critical of the divine right of kings which James favored. This would lead to the King James Authorized Version.

§569 James called The Hampton Court Conference to address religious issues and reconcile some of the divisions within the Church of England. The conference was held at Hampton Court Palace and was attended by bishops, theologians, and Puritan leaders. The Puritans presented a series of requests and grievances

The Big Idea:

The King James Version was the first truly collaborative effort that could not be attacked for a bias in translation

at the conference. One of their main concerns was the state of the English Bible. They sought a new English Bible translation, believing that it should be a more accurate, faithful, and accessible representation of the Scriptures. They also requested that the Geneva Bible, with its Calvinist commentary and notes, be officially endorsed and used in churches.

§570 James, who was a strong advocate for the Church of England and its hierarchical structure, did not favor the Puritans' request to adopt the Geneva Bible or their theological positions. In response to the Puritans' request for a new Bible translation, King James agreed to commission a new English translation that would be more universally accepted and less influenced by specific theological positions.

§571 The inclusion of translators from a variety of perspectives created checks and balances as they worked together. They included:

- High Church Anglicans: Some scholars and theologians on the committee were aligned with the High Church tradition within Anglicanism. High Church Anglicans emphasized the importance of liturgy, the episcopal hierarchy, and the continuity of the Church of England with the pre-Reformation Catholic Church.
- Broad Church Anglicans: Others were more moderate or broad in their churchmanship. Broad Church Anglicans emphasized a broad and inclusive approach to church doctrine and practice, often seeking to mediate between the more extreme positions within the Church of England.
- Reformed and Puritan Influence: Some members of the committee were influenced by Reformed theology and had Puritan leanings. They may have held views more aligned with Reformed Protestantism, including the theology of John Calvin.
- Academic Scholars: Several members of the committee were distinguished scholars with expertise in classical languages, history, and biblical studies. Their contributions went beyond doctrinal positions and focused on ensuring the accuracy and elegance of the translation.

§572 The committee was deliberately diverse to ensure that the translation would be acceptable to a wide range of theological perspectives within the Church of England. This diversity allowed the KJV to become a translation that could be embraced by both Anglicans and Puritans, as well as a broad spectrum of English-speaking Christians.

• The Catholic Counter-Reformation and the Council of Trent

§573 The Counter-Reformation, also known as the Catholic Reformation, was a period of revival and reform within the Roman Catholic Church in response to the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. It aimed to address the challenges posed by the Protestant movement, renew the Catholic Church's spiritual vitality, and

The Big Idea:
The Catholic Counter-Reformation response defined much Catholic theology as we know it today.

counteract the spread of Protestantism. The Council of Trent (1545-1563) was specifically an effort to clarify reforms and contained numerous Decrees on Reformation. It largely defined Catholicism as we know it today

DECREE CONCERNING THE EDITION, AND THE USE, OF THE SACRED BOOKS

Moreover, the same sacred and holy Synod,--considering that no small utility may accrue to the Church of God, if it be made known which out of all the Latin editions, now in circulation, of the sacred books, is to be held as authentic, **ordains and declares, that the said old and vulgate edition, which, by the lengthened usage of so many years, has been approved of in the Church,** be, in public lectures, disputations, sermons and expositions, held as authentic; and that **no one is to dare, or presume to reject it under any pretext whatever**...in order to restrain petulant spirits, It decrees, that **no one, relying on his own skill, shall,** in matters of faith, and of morals pertaining to the edification of Christian doctrine, --wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, **presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church,**--whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures,--hath held and doth hold; or even contrary to the unanimous consent of the Fathers; even though such interpretations were never (intended) to be at any time published.

...it shall not be lawful for any one to print, or cause to be printed, any books whatever, on sacred matters, without the name of the author; nor to sell them in future, or even to keep them, unless they shall have been first examined, and approved of, by the Ordinary; under pain of the anathema...

DECREE ON JUSTIFICATION

[The Council clarified Catholic teaching on justification, affirming that it is a process initiated by God's grace and faith, with good works as a necessary component. The council made a strong statement about salvation by grace and not by works but then confuses the issue]...**no one can know with a certainty of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God.**

CANON IX.-**If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified;** in such wise as to mean, **that nothing else is required to co-operate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will; let him be anathema.**

CANON XI.-**If any one saith...that the grace, whereby we are justified, is only the favour of God; let him be anathema.**

CANON XII.-**If any one saith, that justifying faith is nothing else but confidence in the divine mercy which remits sins for Christ's sake; or, that this confidence alone is that whereby we are justified; let him be anathema.**

CANON XIII.-**If any one saith, that it is necessary for every one, for the obtaining the remission of sins, that he believe for certain, and without any wavering arising from his own infirmity and disposition, that his sins are forgiven him; let him be anathema.**

CANON XIV.-**If any one saith, that man is truly absolved from his sins and**

justified, because that he assuredly believed himself absolved and justified; or, that no one is truly justified but he who believes himself justified; and that, by this faith alone, absolution and justification are effected; let him be anathema.

CANON XX.-If any one saith, that the man who is justified and how perfect soever, is not bound to observe the commandments of God and of the Church, but only to believe; as if indeed the Gospel were a bare and absolute promise of eternal life, without the condition of observing the commandments ; let him be anathema.

CANON XXIV.-If any one saith, that the justice received is not preserved and also increased before God through good works; but that the said works are merely the fruits and signs of Justification obtained, but not a cause of the increase thereof; let him be anathema.

CANON XXVII.-If any one saith, that there is no mortal sin but that of infidelity; or, that grace once received is not lost by any other sin, however grievous and enormous, save by that of infidelity ; let him be anathema.

CANON XXX.-If any one saith, that, after the grace of Justification has been received, to every penitent sinner the guilt is remitted, and the debt of eternal punishment is blotted out in such wise, that there remains not any debt of temporal punishment to be discharged either in this world, or in the next in Purgatory, before the entrance to the kingdom of heaven can be opened (to him); let him be anathema.

ON THE SACRAMENTS IN GENERAL

[The Council reaffirmed the seven sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony) and provided definitions and regulations regarding their administration. Baptism takes away sin and makes a child innocent and that Mary was born immaculate, or without original sin.]

CANON I.-If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law were not all instituted by Jesus Christ, our Lord; or, that they are more, or less, than seven, to wit, Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, Extreme Unction, Order, and Matrimony; or even that any one of these seven is not truly and properly a sacrament; let him be anathema.

CANON IV.-If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous; and that, without them, or without the desire thereof, men obtain of God, through faith alone, the grace of justification;-though all (the sacraments) are not ineed necessary for every individual; let him be anathema.

On BAPTISM

CANON V.-If any one saith, that baptism is free, that is, not necessary unto salvation; let him be anathema.

CANON XIII.-If any one saith, that little children, for that they have not actual faith, are not, after having received baptism, to be reckoned amongst the faithful; and that, for this cause, they are to be rebaptized when they have attained to years of discretion; or, that it is better that the baptism of such be omitted, than that, while not believing by their own act, they should be bapized in the faith alone of

the Church; let him be anathema.

ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF THE EUCHARIST

And because that Christ, our Redeemer, declared that which He offered under the species of bread to be truly His own body, therefore has it ever been a firm belief in the Church of God, and this holy Synod doth now declare it anew, that, by the consecration of the bread and of the wine, a conversion is made of the whole substance of the bread into the substance of the body of Christ our Lord, and of the whole substance of the wine into the substance of His blood; which conversion is, by the holy Catholic Church, suitably and properly called Transubstantiation.

CANON V.-If any one saith, either that the principal fruit of the most holy Eucharist is the remission of sins, or, that other effects do not result therefrom; let him be anathema.

CANON VIII.-If any one saith, that Christ, given in the Eucharist, is eaten spiritually only, and not also sacramentally and really; let him be anathema.

CANON IX.-If any one denieth, that all and each of Christ's faithful of both sexes are bound, when they have attained to years of discretion, to communicate every year, at least at Easter, in accordance with the precept of holy Mother Church; let him be anathema.

ON THE MOST HOLY SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

CANON VI.--If any one denieth, either that sacramental confession was instituted, or is necessary to salvation, of divine right; or saith, that the manner of confessing secretly to a priest alone, which the Church hath ever observed from the beginning, and doth observe, is alien from the institution and command of Christ, and is a human invention; let him be anathema.

ON THE SACRIFICE OF THE MASS.

CANON I.--If any one saith, that in the mass a true and proper sacrifice is not offered to God; or, that to be offered is nothing else but that Christ is given us to eat; let him be anathema.

CANON II.--If any one saith, that by those words, Do this for the commemoration of me (Luke xxii. 19), Christ did not institute the apostles priests; or, did not ordain that they, and other priests should offer His own body and blood; let him be anathema.

CANON III.--If any one saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities; let him be anathema.

CANON V.--If any one saith, that it is an imposture to celebrate masses in honour of the saints, and for obtaining their intercession with God, as the Church intends; let him be anathema.

ON THE SACRAMENT OF ORDER.

CANON I.--If any one saith, that there is not in the New Testament a visible and external priesthood; or that there is not any power of consecrating and offering the true body and blood of the Lord, and of forgiving and retaining sins; but only an office and bare ministry of preaching the Gospel, or, that those who do not preach are not priests at all; let him be anathema.

CANON VI.--If any one saith, that, in the Catholic Church there is not a hierarchy by divine ordination instituted, consisting of bishops, priests, and ministers; let him be anathema.

DECREE CONCERNING PURGATORY.

Whereas the Catholic Church, instructed by the Holy Ghost, has, from the sacred writings and the ancient tradition of the Fathers, taught, in sacred councils, and very recently in this oecumenical Synod, that there is a Purgatory, and that the souls there detained are helped by the suffrages of the faithful, but principally by the acceptable sacrifice of the altar; the holy Synod enjoins on bishops that they diligently endeavour that the sound doctrine concerning Purgatory, transmitted by the holy Fathers and sacred councils, be believed, maintained, taught, and every where proclaimed by the faithful of Christ.

• Reformation churches

The denominations of the Reformation were shaped by the views of Huldrych Zwingli, John Knox, John Calvin, Martin Luther, and various figures in the Anglican church. They generally all preached salvation by grace through faith alone, but there were a few areas in which they had interesting differences.

Denominational association

- Huldrych Zwingli, Swiss Reformed Church (a broader Reformed group than John Calvin)
- John Calvin – The Reformed Church of Geneva
- John Knox – Presbyterian Church of Scotland
- Martin Luther – Lutheran Church (although at the beginning they were known as *Evangelical churches* and sometimes as Lutheran churches)

Communion (The Lord's Supper)

- Zwingli: Zwingli held to a symbolic or memorial view of the Eucharist, where the bread and wine were seen as mere symbols and do not convey grace.
- Knox: Knox held to a similar symbolic view, emphasizing the memorial nature of the Lord's Supper.
- Calvin: Calvin believed in the "sacramental union," where Christ's real presence coexisted with the bread and wine in a spiritual manner, distinct from transubstantiation.

- Luther: Luther held to a "consubstantiation" view, believing that Christ's true body and blood were present alongside the bread and wine.
- Anglican Church: The Anglican tradition encompasses a range of views on the Eucharist. It accommodates a spectrum from a more symbolic understanding (akin to Zwingli) to a "Real Presence" theology, which falls somewhere between Lutheran and Calvinist views.

Baptism

- Zwingli: Zwingli viewed baptism as a sign of commitment to Christ but not as a means of regeneration or salvation.
- Knox: Knox shared a similar symbolic view of baptism, emphasizing the role of faith.
- Calvin: Calvin believed in infant baptism, considering it a means of grace and a covenant sign.
- Luther: Luther retained a high view of infant baptism, seeing it as conferring forgiveness and regeneration.
- Anglican Church: The Anglican Church generally practices infant baptism and holds that it initiates individuals into the covenant community. It recognizes baptism as a means of grace and a sign of God's promises.

Polity (Church Governance)

- Zwingli: Zwingli advocated for a congregational model with local autonomy.
- Knox: Knox promoted a presbyterian system with ruling and teaching elders and higher church courts.
- Calvin: Calvin advocated for a presbyterian system similar to Knox's, with local congregations led by elders and ministers, regional assemblies, and a general assembly.
- Luther: Luther supported a hierarchical structure with state involvement in church governance.
- Anglican Church: The Anglican Church follows an episcopal polity, with bishops providing a hierarchical structure. It maintains a unique blend of tradition, scripture, and reason, and the monarch is the Supreme Governor of the Church of England.

Worship

- Zwingli: Zwinglian worship emphasized simplicity, removed religious imagery, and promoted an iconoclastic movement.
- Knox: Knox advocated for relatively simple worship services with an emphasis on preaching.
- Calvin: Calvinist worship featured a regulated form with a strong focus on preaching and liturgical elements.
- Luther: Luther's liturgy retained many elements of the Roman Catholic Mass, adapted to accommodate Lutheran theology.
- Anglican Church: Anglican worship exhibits liturgical diversity. The Book of Common Prayer guides Anglican liturgy, offering both traditional and contemporary

forms of worship.

Doctrinal Confessions

- Zwingli: Zwingli's theological views are expressed in his "Sixty-Seven Articles" and "Fidei Ratio."
- Knox: Knox is associated with the Scots Confession, which reflects his theological influence.
- Calvin: Calvin's "Institutes of the Christian Religion" provided a theological framework. The Heidelberg Catechism and the Westminster Confession were influenced by Calvinist theology.
- Luther: Luther's Small and Large Catechisms, along with his writings, contributed to Lutheran confessional documents like the Augsburg Confession.
- Anglican Church: The Anglican tradition is guided by the Book of Common Prayer, the Thirty-Nine Articles of Religion, and the Lambeth Quadrilateral. It emphasizes both scripture and tradition in theological formation.

The Anglican Church's positions often reflect a "via media" or middle way between Reformed and Catholic traditions. Anglican theology and practice have varied over time and across different regions, allowing for a degree of theological diversity within the tradition.

Church governance today

Church polity is recognized in several forms today.

Catholic	Episcopal	Presbyterian	Congregational Congregational/Baptist	
Church controls the state	State control Strong**	State control Mild**	State control Weak*	State control None
System of Bishops	System of Bishops	System of Pastors and elected Elders	System of elected Pastors and Elders	System of elected Pastors and Deacons
Bishops control the church with Pope at the head	Bishops control the church	Sessions/ Consistories made up of Pastors and Elders control the churches	Congregations control the churches	Congregations control the churches
Reports to a hierarchy	Reports to a hierarchy	Reports to a synod or other governing body	Does not report to a higher authority	Does not report to a higher authority

Infant Baptism	Infant Baptism	Infant Baptism	Infant Baptism	Believers Baptism
Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox	Anglican, Episcopalian, Methodist	Reformed, Presbyterian, Lutheran	Congregational	Baptists or baptistic, Non-denominational
Centralizing Very Strong	Centralizing Strong	Centralizing Mild	Centralizing None	Centralizing None

*After the American Revolutionary War, Congregational Churches had no state controls

**This does not apply to America, only in certain countries in the Anglosphere, the Anglican Church is still recognized as a state church or has church recognition, the state church of Scotland is Presbyterian

• Baptist and Ana-baptist churches

Baptism and Citizenship

As they gained prominence, Baptists became identified by their opponents as Baptists (at first ana-Baptist) as a term of derision and condemnation. This was ironic since Baptists placed the least encumbrance on the significance of Baptism while Catholicism and Protestantism the most. The significant difference laid on the fact that for the centralized churches which were tied to the state, re-baptism (anabaptism) was a repudiation of the authority of the state. To be baptized as an infant was to be declared not only a communicant of the church but a citizen of the state to which the church was tied. Although there were variations on this, the pressure was to identify with the community through baptism. Various states established prohibitions against being rebaptized:

- Switzerland: Swiss cantons, including Zurich and Bern, had strict laws against Anabaptism. Ulrich Zwingli, a leading Reformer in Zurich, opposed the Anabaptists, and some Anabaptists were executed or expelled from the city.
- Germany: Several German states, both Protestant and Catholic, passed laws against Anabaptism. The punishment for Anabaptists could include imprisonment, fines, and even death.
- The Netherlands: The Dutch Republic had a range of responses to Anabaptism, with some provinces more tolerant than others. In some regions, Anabaptists were subjected to persecution and restrictions.
- England: During the English Reformation, Anabaptists were viewed with suspicion, and laws were passed to suppress their activities.
- The Holy Roman Empire: Laws against Anabaptism were enforced in various regions of the Holy Roman Empire, including areas that later became parts of present-day Germany and Austria.
- Roman Catholic States: In Catholic territories, Anabaptists were often persecuted, and their practices were prohibited. The Catholic Church considered Anabaptism a heresy.

The Baptist Distinctives

§574 In order to appreciate the historical development of Baptist churches in this time period an understanding of the Baptist distinctives is important. Churches as Baptists began to appear in this age of decentralization. As church/state power began to breakdown and denominations started to coalesce, Baptists became more clearly identified. It was not as though churches like Baptists had not existed before, but the common distinctions were clearly associated with Baptist congregations and they existed with greater transparency of operation. Various Baptists place a greater or lesser significance on a connection of Baptist churches over the course of church history, but what is clearly significant was the degree to which churches struggled for a free church adhering to the Bible as its authority. The Baptist distinctives are commonly taught by the acronym *Baptist*.

B - Biblical Authority: Baptists emphasize the authority of the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice. They believe that the Bible is the ultimate source of guidance for matters of faith and church life.

A - Autonomy of the Local Church: Baptists believe in the autonomy or self-governance of individual local churches. Each church is considered independent and self-determining in its decisions and practices.

P - Priesthood of All Believers: Baptists affirm the priesthood of all believers, which means that every believer has direct access to God and the responsibility to interpret Scripture for themselves. There is no need for an intermediary priesthood.

T - Two Ordinances (Baptism and the Lord's Supper): Baptists typically recognize two ordinances: believer's baptism by immersion and the Lord's Supper (communion).²³

I - Individual Soul Liberty: Individual soul liberty is the belief that each person has the freedom and responsibility to make decisions about their faith and conscience. This includes the freedom to interpret the Bible and make choices in religious matters without coercion.

S - Saved Church Membership: Baptists practice saved church membership, meaning that only individuals who have made a credible profession of faith in Christ are eligible for membership in the local church. This practice is closely tied to believer's baptism.

T - Two Offices (Pastor/Elder and Deacon): Baptists generally recognize two biblical offices within the local church: pastors/elders and deacons. Pastors/elders are responsible for spiritual leadership and teaching, while deacons assist with practical and administrative matters.

S - Separation of Church and State: Baptists believe in the separation of religious

²³These are not sacraments because sacraments are understood to have some kind of spiritual efficacy. The Lord's Supper is never called the Eucharist.

institutions (churches) from governmental or political authorities (the state). This principle emphasizes the autonomy of the local church and the rejection of state interference or control in matters of faith and worship.

There are several important issues to recognize about these distinctives:

- This acronym is not a creed that one must confess to be a Baptist. It is more like a reputation. Those who identify as Baptists came to be commonly known for these stances.
- With these distinctives, Baptists cannot properly be called a denomination. Although Baptists will form working relationships in associations and conventions, they zealously guard their identity as being independent and autonomous. This is in spite of whether any association has formed any great social pressure to conform to standard.
- While some in our modern times do not use the name Baptist because of some falsely perceived marketing disadvantage, there are many non-denominational churches that can identify with these distinctives.
- Although these distinctives touch on *some* theological issues, there are many issues that are *not* included in the distinctives. Baptist churches commonly respect the right of each church to be responsible for their own doctrinal stands.

Baptist development

§575 In this section we are only concerned with the development of Baptists in this church age. More Baptist history will be examined as it unfolded in the next church age periods.

Anabaptist precursors

§576 During the Reformation era, prominent Anabaptist pioneers and leaders emerged who played significant roles in the development and spread of Anabaptism as a precursor to Baptists. Anabaptism was a diverse movement, and its leaders held varying theological and ecclesiological positions.

- Conrad Grebel (c. 1498-1526): Conrad Grebel is often regarded as one of the founders of the Anabaptist movement. He was a Swiss reformer and a close associate of Ulrich Zwingli in Zurich. **Grebel, along with others, believed that Zwingli's reforms did not go far enough, especially concerning the practice of infant baptism.** In 1525, Grebel and a small group performed the first adult baptism, marking the beginning of the Anabaptist movement.
- Felix Manz (c. 1498-1527): Felix Manz was another early Swiss Anabaptist leader and a contemporary of Conrad Grebel. He was one of the first individuals to be executed for his Anabaptist beliefs. **Manz was drowned in Zurich in 1527 for his refusal to recant his views.**
- Balthasar Hubmaier (c. 1480-1528): Balthasar Hubmaier was a theologian and Anabaptist leader in Austria. He played a significant role in the spread of Anabaptism in Central Europe. Hubmaier's theological writings and advocacy for

religious freedom were influential among Anabaptists.

- Michael Sattler (c. 1490-1527): Michael Sattler was a former Benedictine monk who became a leader of the Swiss Anabaptists. He is known for his role in the development of the Schleitheim Confession, a key Anabaptist theological document. Sattler was martyred in 1527.
- Menno Simons (1496-1561): Menno Simons was a Dutch Catholic priest who later became a prominent Anabaptist leader. He is considered the namesake of the Mennonite movement. Menno Simons provided theological leadership and helped organize Anabaptist congregations.
- Jacob Hutter (c. 1500-1536): Jacob Hutter was a leader of the Hutterite Anabaptists, a group known for their communal living practices. Hutter and his followers established Hutterite colonies in Moravia and other regions.
- Dirk Willems (c. 1506-1569): Dirk Willems is known for his courageous act of rescuing his pursuer when the pursuer fell through ice during Willems's escape from authorities. Despite his act of mercy, Willems was recaptured and executed for his Anabaptist beliefs.

§577 These Anabaptist pioneers and leaders contributed to the growth and spread of the Anabaptist movement in various regions of Europe. Their theological writings, martyrdom, and commitment to adult baptism as a matter of personal faith had a lasting impact on the development of Anabaptist theology and denominations, including the Mennonites, Hutterites, and others.

Baptists proceed from England

§578 The growth of Baptist churches proceeded primarily from England. Some contemporary historians argue that English Baptists represented a novel phenomenon during the 16th century. However, the only truly novel aspect was their designation as "Baptists," a departure from the names by which they had been previously identified. A thorough summary of Baptist growth is available in *A History of the Churches* (David Cloud, p. 253-273). Also, Armitage and Newman are two great sources for more detail.

§579 Of special note is Thomas Helwys (c. 1575-1616). He had been a member of expatriate John Smyth's Baptist congregation in the Netherlands. In 1611, Helwys published a significant work titled "A Short Declaration of the Mystery of Iniquity." In this book, he argued for religious freedom and the separation of church and state, advocating that individuals should be free to practice their faith without coercion. He is often credited with being one of the earliest advocates of religious liberty in the English language.

§580 In 1612, Helwys returned to England from the Netherlands, despite the risks of persecution for his beliefs. He and a small group of believers established the first Baptist congregation on English soil, meeting in Spitalfields, London. Helwys's commitment to religious freedom and the practice of adult baptism in England laid the foundation for later developments in Baptist identity. He died in prison in 1616, likely as a result of his religious convictions and advocacy for religious liberty.

§581 Further development of Baptist churches will be covered in *New Churches in the New World, Baptists in early America* (p. 209)

• **New Churches in the New World**

Religious freedom for me but not for thee

§582 During the colonial period in America, various Christian denominations and religious groups arrived in the New World seeking religious freedom and the opportunity to practice their faith according to their own beliefs. While some colonies were established explicitly for religious reasons, such as the Puritan settlement in Massachusetts Bay or the Quaker colony of Pennsylvania, others were more religiously diverse. The extent to which these early American colonies restricted or favored particular denominations or religious groups varied significantly:

In some colonies, an "established church" received official support and privileges from the colonial government. For example:

- The Church of England (Anglicanism) was the established church in Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, and parts of New York.
- The Congregational Church was established in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire.

§583 These established churches often received tax revenue and other forms of government support. Dissenters from these established churches faced various forms of discrimination and restrictions.

§584 Other colonies, like Rhode Island and Pennsylvania, were founded on principles of religious toleration and freedom.

- Rhode Island, founded by Roger Williams, was known for its commitment to religious liberty and separation of church and state. It granted religious freedom to various denominations. The first synagogue in America was established in Rhode Island.
- Pennsylvania, founded by William Penn, was also characterized by religious tolerance, attracting diverse religious groups, including Quakers, Baptists, and others.

§585 In some colonies, dissenting religious groups faced varying degrees of discrimination and restrictions:

- Baptists and Quakers, for example, often encountered hostility and legal obstacles in colonies where the established church held sway.
- In Puritan Massachusetts, dissenters like Anne Hutchinson and Roger Williams were banished for their beliefs.
- In some cases, religious dissenters were fined, imprisoned, or denied the right to vote.

The Half-Way Covenant

§586 Without the enforced retention of members in the European state churches, the colonists drifted into spiritual decline. This led to an alarm in the New England Congregational churches which put the Reformed community church above the need for true conversion and spirituality. Covenant theology without state reenforcement of

church participation did not succeed on its own to maintain church participation.

Baptism and Covenant Theology

§587 Because of the allegorical interpretation of the Revelation strongly influenced by Augustine (p. 138), aspects of the Old Testament covenants became mixed with the New Testament, blending Israel as the church in the Old Testament with the Church in the New Testament. Infant baptism became a link between the two. Once baptism was interpreted as effective for salvation and applied to infants, the sign of the New Birth for the Christian became associated with the sign of inclusion for Jews in the old covenant of circumcision. As both were associated with inclusion in their respective communities, infants became included without the benefit of faith without which there can be no true inclusion in Christ.

Since covenants were given to individuals and their descendants in the Old Testament, Christian families were treated with the same covenantal relationship. By baptizing their infants, they were including them in the church community, even though they knew that to be truly Christian they would have to have a testimony of personal faith later on of their own. Children of non-members or non-believers were not eligible for baptism.

A diminished church

§588 By the late 17th century, the New England colonies were experiencing demographic changes. Many second and third generations of Puritans were growing up in the colonies, and they did not always exhibit the same level of religious piety and commitment as their parents and grandparents. This generation, sometimes referred to as the "Half-Way Covenant Generation," faced the question of church membership.

§589 In Puritan theology, *full* church membership was typically reserved for those who could provide evidence of a personal conversion experience and a "saving grace" encounter with God. However, many young adults in the colonies had not experienced this conversion in the same way as their elders.

§590 Some Puritan ministers, including Solomon Stoddard of Northampton, Massachusetts, advocated for a more inclusive approach to church membership. They believed that allowing the children of church members to be baptized and enjoy certain privileges, even if they had not experienced a full conversion, would keep them connected to the church and, ideally, eventually lead to their conversion.

§591 In 1662, a synod of New England ministers formally adopted the Half-Way Covenant as a way to address these challenges. Under this covenant, individuals who had been baptized as infants but had not experienced a full conversion could become "half-way" church members. They could have their own children baptized and participate in some church activities, but they could not partake in the Lord's Supper or hold certain church offices.

§592 Critics of the Halfway Covenant, like Jonathan Edwards, believed that it contributed to a decline in the spiritual depth and fervor of the congregations. They argued that allowing unconverted individuals to participate in church activities without a genuine conversion undermined the biblical and doctrinal foundations of the church. They were creating an inclusive approach aimed at maintaining church attendance and

social cohesion.

§593 It is impossible to view a church made up of un-regenerate members as not being compromised. These views paved the way for the Great Awakening (p. 224)

Baptists in early America

Roger Williams and the first Baptist church

§594 Baptists in early America got off to a slow start due to the suppression in various locations (see p. 207). In 1631, The highly educated Puritan minister Roger Williams arrived in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Williams held dissenting views on religious matters. He believed that the Church of England was corrupt and that the King of England had no right to grant land in the New World without first purchasing it from the Native Americans. He also argued for the complete separation of church and state, a radical idea at the time. He openly criticized the religious establishment and government of the Massachusetts Bay Colony for its failure to completely break away from the Church of England and its oppressive treatment of religious dissenters.

§595 Williams' outspoken views and criticisms led to his banishment from the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635. The colony's leaders believed that his ideas posed a threat to their religious and political authority. After being banished, Williams and a small group of followers settled in an area he called Providence, in what is now Rhode Island. There, he established a colony that was founded on the principles of religious freedom, tolerance, and the separation of church and state.

§596 In 1644, Williams secured a charter from the English Parliament for the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, which granted it religious freedom and self-governance. Parliament was able to be convinced to grant a charter in spite of the great general resistance to separation of church and state in that era for several reasons:

- Rhode Island was geographically isolated from the other New England colonies, which meant that it was *not* under the direct jurisdiction or control of the Massachusetts Bay Colony or other nearby colonies. This isolation allowed Rhode Island to develop its own unique approach to governance and religious freedom.
- Several men from Rhode Island, including Roger Williams and Dr. John Clarke, who was a prominent Baptist minister and co-founder of Rhode Island, traveled to England to seek recognition and support for their colony's rights. They presented petitions and made the case for religious liberty and self-governance to various English authorities.
- Rhode Island's representatives in England were able to establish connections with influential figures in the English Parliament who sympathized with the principles of religious freedom. These connections helped them navigate the political landscape and gain support for their cause.
- Sir Henry Vane, a former governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony who was sympathetic to the cause of religious liberty, played a crucial role in advocating for Rhode Island's case in the English Parliament. He used his influence to advance the interests of the Rhode Island colonists.
- Leveraging the English Civil War: The timing of Rhode Island's charter was

significant. The English Civil War (1642-1649) had broken out, leading to political turmoil in England. The Parliamentarians, who were in power at the time, were more open to supporting religious dissenters and granting greater freedoms, including religious freedom.

§597 The charter stated that "no person within the said colony, at any time hereafter, shall be any wise molested, punished, disquieted, or called in question, for any differences in opinion in matters of religion."

§598 Dr. John Clarke and others established the Second Baptist Church in Newport, Rhode Island, making it the second Baptist congregation in the New World. Both of these churches are still in operation today.

Slow Growth

§599 There was growth of Baptist Churches in New Hampshire and New Jersey due to less restrictive attitudes. Before the Great Awakening (p. 224) There were several associations that had formed.

- The Philadelphia Baptist Association, founded in 1707, is one of the earliest Baptist associations in America. It included churches in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Delaware.
- The Charleston Baptist Association in South Carolina is believed to have been established before 1733, making it one of the earliest associations in the South.
- The Charlestown Baptist Church in Rhode Island formed an association in 1715. Rhode Island was a stronghold of religious freedom, and this association was early evidence of Baptist cooperation.
- The General Six-Principle Baptist Association, based in Newport, Rhode Island, was established in 1701. This association represented a branch of the Baptist movement with distinctive views.
- The Welsh Tract Church in Newark, Delaware, founded in 1701, is one of the oldest Baptist churches in America founded by Welsh Baptists. Although not an association, it was greatly influential in church planting in its area.

§600 As a result of the Great Awakening (p. 224) and the Revivalist Movement (p. 224), Baptists flourished under the guarantees of freedom in the new United States of America.

• The Enlightenment: In the meanwhile, over on the other side of the campus....

§601 The Enlightenment (1685-1815) and its effects will be more thoroughly discussed later (p. 245) but the seeds of the Enlightenment took root under the influence of the events of this age.

The roots of the Enlightenment can be found in the turmoil of the English Civil Wars. With the re-establishment of a largely unchanged autocratic monarchy, first with the restoration of Charles II in 1660 and then the ascendancy of James II in 1685,

leading political thinkers began to reappraise how society and politics could (and should) be better structured. Movements for political change resulted in the Glorious Revolution of 1688/89, when William and Mary were installed on the throne as part of the new Protestant settlement. [p. 190]

The ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome were revered by enlightened thinkers, who viewed these communities as potential models for how modern society could be organised. Many commentators of the late 17th century were eager to achieve a clean break from what they saw as centuries of political tyranny, in favour of personal freedoms and happiness centred on the individual. Chief among these thinkers was philosopher and physician John Locke, whose *Two Treatises of Government* (published in 1689) advocated a separation of church and state, religious toleration, the right to property ownership and a contractual obligation on governments to recognise the innate ‘rights’ of the people.

Locke believed that reason and human consciousness were the gateways to contentment and liberty, and he demolished the notion that human knowledge was somehow pre-programmed and mystical. Locke’s ideas reflected the earlier but equally influential works of Thomas Hobbes, which similarly advocated new social contracts between the state and civil society as the key to unlocking personal happiness for all.

– bl.uk/restoration-18th-century-literature/articles/the-enlightenment

§602 Prior to this time, Copernicus had introduced his views of *heliocentrism*, the understanding that the sun was the center of the solar system, in 1543, but this did not come under great scrutiny by the Catholic Church. Later when Galileo's more widely presented work, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems* (1632) the Church's dogmatic stands were being challenged. The prevailing view inherited from Aristotle and Scholasticism (p. 156) had made the earth the center of the solar system. The Church saw this *geocentric* model as affirming the significance of humanity and Earth in God's creation. Shifting to a *heliocentric* model could have been interpreted as diminishing humanity's place in the cosmos, which was a concern for theological reasons.

§603 As a result of these conflicts, Galileo was summoned before the Roman Catholic Inquisition in 1633 and was eventually forced to recant his support for the heliocentric model. He was also placed under house arrest, where he remained until his death in 1642.

§604 The open examination of the Renaissance (1450-1500, review p. 158) had opened up inquiry not only in art, literature, and philosophy, but also in science and politics. The great problem that will come from the Enlightenment is that a little

knowledge is a dangerous thing. Some in the church will try to accommodate immature science not knowing enough to know that they didn't know enough to be so conclusive. This will lead people to base their spirituality on doubt and skepticism as an excuse for their rebellion against God.

<p>The Big Idea: A little knowledge is a dangerous thing.</p>
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1Tim 6:20-21 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

21 Which some professing have erred concerning the faith. Grace *be* with thee.
Amen.

• Ecclesiastical effects of the Reformation

Creedalism

§605 With the degradation of the power and authority of the Catholic Church, churches rallied around new charters for their authority and power. This was the effect of maintaining a state or centralized church. Now, the churches were organized

according to their creeds, confessions, and statements of faith that defined their denominations. Creedalism is the practice of adhering to and affirming specific creeds or statements of faith as authoritative and central to a religious tradition.

§606 With greater liberty and freedom of religion, Baptists began to flourish, although not without persecutions before the American Constitution and Bill of Rights. The particular strength of Baptists was the avoidance of having a defining document other than the Bible. The establishment and organization of Baptist churches (see p. 203) was not without *any* definition or constitution. The Baptist distinctives (p. 204) were more organic and coalesced as they responded to the most common problems that the Reformation faced. Baptists should always be careful to resist having even their statement of faith be treated as a creed. The statement of faith should always be treated as a communication tool for giving people an idea of what to expect from the basic teaching of a church.

§607 With the rise of creedalism, the very purpose of the Reformation was betrayed in that what began as another return to the preaching of the Gospel descended to compromise in an attempt to cling to subscribers (see *The Half-Way Covenant*, p. 208) or a stilted orthodoxy (see *Old Lights vs. New Lights*, p. 221). The over-emphasis of the intellectual resulted in pressure for an emotional response to balance it out. Unfortunately, this will also lead to unhealthy skepticism as people will leave off efforts to carefully define their faith as an effect of the Enlightenment and Rationalism. This, in turn, will lead to treating truth as subjective which will occur in the face of the open door for the Gospel in the Philadelphian age of the church. It will come to full fruition as it defines the Laodicean age.

Latitudinarianism

§608 Latitudinarianism stood lightly in opposition to creedalism as a moderate theological movement within the Church of England during the 17th century. It emerged in response to the religious and political upheaval of the time, including the English Civil War and the Interregnum (1642-1660), which had left the Church of England deeply divided. Latitudinarians sought to promote a more inclusive and tolerant form

The Big Idea:
How the Sardis church age became dead

of Anglicanism, emphasizing reason, moderation, and a broad church approach.

§609 Latitudinarians emphasized the use of reason and moderation in theological and doctrinal disputes. They encouraged a more rational and less dogmatic approach to religious matters. The Enlightenment era, with its emphasis on reason and religious toleration, reflected some of the values championed by Latitudinarians.

While the Latitudinarian movement faded by the end of the Sardis age of the church, it paved the way for the Oxford Movement (1833-1850, see p. 260). The Oxford Movement reacted against the decline in spirituality attributed to the Latitudinarian movement not by a revival of Scriptural principles, but re-enforcing a high church character.

• Theological principles of the Reformation

The Five Solas

§610 The *Five Solas* are a set of theological principles that emerged during the Protestant Reformation. They were not a declaration as a *starting* point for the Reformation but became common themes of the age with different reformers emphasizing various aspects. The Five Solas are understood in *retrospect* as key doctrinal pillars of Protestant and Evangelical Christianity. They emphasize the core beliefs that distinguished the reformers from the Roman Catholic Church at the time.

- *Sola Scriptura* (Scripture Alone): This principle asserts that the Bible, as the inspired and authoritative Word of God, is the sole source of Christian doctrine and the ultimate authority for faith and practice. It means that all teachings and traditions should be tested and aligned with the Scriptures.
- *Sola Fide* (Faith Alone): *Sola Fide* emphasizes that salvation is achieved through faith in Jesus Christ alone, apart from any human works or merit. It teaches that faith in Jesus as Lord and Savior is the means by which individuals are justified before God and receive the gift of eternal life.
- *Sola Gratia* (Grace Alone): *Sola Gratia* underscores that salvation is a result of God's unmerited favor and grace. It emphasizes that humans are unable to earn or deserve salvation through their good works but instead receive it as a gift from God, solely based on His grace.
- *Solus Christus* (Christ Alone): *Solus Christus* emphasizes that Jesus Christ is the only mediator between God and humanity. It asserts that salvation comes through Christ's atoning work on the cross, and there is no need for any other intermediaries or human priests to access God's grace.
- *Soli Deo Gloria* (Glory to God Alone): *Soli Deo Gloria* teaches that the ultimate purpose of all things, including human existence, is to bring glory to God alone. It encourages believers to live their lives in a way that honors and glorifies God in all they do, recognizing that He is the supreme focus of worship and adoration.

§611 Stated in this way, the Five Solas represent the best that came from the Protestant Reformation. They define the Scriptural principles that met the struggle of their day, much as the Fundamentals (p. 254, 256) will define the response to

Modernism in the 20th century.

§612 Calvinists, Arminians (p. 214), and Provisionists (p. 270) should all be able to subscribe to them as commonly stated, but objections will arise in reaction to the way their terms are defined. Some of our objections would be, for example,

- Sola Fide (Faith Alone): Calvinists typically emphasize the doctrine of "monergistic regeneration," which means that God unilaterally and irresistibly regenerates a person's heart, *enabling* them to have faith in Christ. We would argue for what is called a more synergistic view where humans *cooperate* with God's grace in that God's part is to provide the Gospel but man's part is to believe Gospel because the ability to believe, like intellect, emotion, and will, is part of the constitution of man.
- Sola Gratia (Grace Alone): Calvinists emphasize that God not only determines who is going to get saved but that He transforms their spirit and gives them the ability to believe as an act that is independent of any personal consideration. Then, once He has done this, man has no option but to give in to the Gospel. We object to the Calvinistic concept of "irresistible grace," which suggests that God's grace cannot be resisted.
- Solus Christus (Christ Alone): While both Calvinists and non-Calvinists agree on the centrality of Christ for salvation, debates can arise about the extent of Christ's atonement. Calvinists often hold to a "limited atonement" or "particular redemption," which asserts that Christ's atonement was only for the elect. Non-Calvinists advocate for a "universal atonement" view that Christ's sacrifice is sufficient for all but effective only for those who believe.
- Soli Deo Gloria (Glory to God Alone): In this area, disagreements center on the concept of "divine determinism" within Calvinism. Predestination diminishes human responsibility and accountability, making God the author of sin or rendering human choices meaningless. They may assert that God's glory is best displayed through human free will and moral responsibility.

The Remonstrance and the systemization of Calvinism

Arminius 1560-1608 and Arminianism

§613 Jacob Arminius was born in Oudewater, a city in the Netherlands in 1560 shortly after the start of the English Reformation and the reign of Elizabeth I (1558) and before the death of John Calvin (1564). In 1575, eleven years after Calvin was passed, Arminius entered the University of Leiden to study theology under the Reformed theologian Theodore Beza, a successor to John Calvin. In 1582, he moved to Geneva to study further under Beza at the Academy of Geneva, returning to the Netherlands in 1587 and became a pastor in Amsterdam and became involved in theological controversies within the Dutch Reformed Church. He taught a modified understanding of predestination, emphasizing God's foreknowledge and human free will. Arminius was disturbed by the way the teaching of Augustinian Calvinism was being systematized. He passed away in 1608 but others continued his concerns creating a document called the Remonstrance (an earnest presentation of reasons for opposition or grievance). In it they presented the differences between their doctrines and those of

the strict Calvinists.

The Five Articles of Remonstrance

- Conditional Election (Conditional Predestination): The Remonstrants believed that God's election of individuals to **salvation is conditional, based on His foreknowledge of their faith or acceptance of the gospel**. In other words, **God predestines those whom He foresees will believe in Christ. This is contrary to the teaching in Ephesians that one is predestined to glory once they are saved and in Christ.**
- Universal Atonement: The Remonstrants held that Christ's **atonement on the cross is universal**, meaning it was made for all people and is sufficient to cover the sins of the entire world. However, **it becomes effective only for those who believe.**
- Total Depravity (Partial Depravity): While the Remonstrants acknowledged human depravity, they disagreed with the idea of total depravity as taught by strict Calvinism. They believed that **man is not completely incapable of responding positively to God's grace.**
- Resistible Grace: The Remonstrants maintained that God's grace can be resisted by human free will. **Individuals have the ability to reject or accept God's offer of salvation, and grace does not work irresistibly.**
- Conditional Perseverance: The Remonstrants asserted that **believers have the ability to fall away from grace and lose their salvation if they choose to reject God and turn away from faith. Perseverance in faith is conditional on the believer's continued trust in Christ.**

These views, while an improvement on Calvinism, do not reflect a normal Provisionist teaching on soteriology (p. 270).

The Synod of Dort

§614 The Synod of Dort was called by the Dutch government and met from 1618-1619 to address theological disputes in the Arminian controversy. The Arminian participants were marginalized and the Remonstrants were officially banned from the Dutch Reformed Church, although they had limited freedom and protection to form their own churches. Today, Methodists and Weslyans are prominent denominations that hold to Arminian theology.

§615 The Canons of Dort were formulated, articulating the Reformed response to Arminianism. Arminianism was an issue at the time English Civil War ((1642-1649, p. 188).

The Synod of Dort and the Canons of Dort 1618-1619

§616 The Canons of Dort are more popularly known as the Doctrines of Grace or by the acronym TULIP which stands for the five points of Calvinism.

- Total Depravity: This point affirms the total depravity of humanity, asserting that

all humans are born in sin and are unable to choose God or contribute to their own salvation apart from divine grace.

- **Unconditional Election:** Unconditional election teaches that God, out of His sovereign will and not based on any foreseen merit in humans, chooses some individuals to be saved.
- **Limited Atonement:** Limited atonement, also called "particular redemption," holds that Christ's atoning work on the cross was specifically for the elect, securing their salvation.
- **Irresistible Grace:** Irresistible grace asserts that God's grace in salvation is effectual and cannot be resisted by those whom He has chosen to save.
- **Perseverance of the Saints:** This doctrine teaches that those whom God has elected and regenerated will persevere in faith and cannot lose their salvation.

Partial Calvinism?

§617 Some will call themselves three or four point Calvinists because they have problems with Limited Atonement or Irresistible Grace. Others have pointed out that all five points stand or fall together, to deny one means to deny all, to affirm one means to affirm all. It is a mistake to classify people as either Calvinists or Arminians. An alternative term is Provisionism (see p. 270).

There are aspects of the five points of Calvinism that at first might seem plausible. However, the five point framework is not acceptable at all. The following chart does not take into consideration Arminianism but represents our doctrinal position:

Doctrines of Grace Teach	Comparative Alternative Statement
Total Inability (Depravity): total inability to respond to God with faith while lost	Total Corruption (Depravity): Man is corrupted by sin in body, soul, and spirit but is able to respond in faith
Unconditional Election: Chooses some people to be saved while choosing others to be lost ²⁴	Corporate Election: once someone has called out in faith to be saved, they are placed in Christ (or, in the body of Christ) and thus become one of the elect
Limited Atonement: Christ died only for the predestined elect	Universal Atonement: Christ died for all but it is only effective for those who accept it

²⁴Certain Calvinists do not admit that choosing some to be saved does not mean that God chooses some to be lost

<p>Irresistible Grace: God makes someone born again with a quickened spirit he is able to call out in faith to be saved. Once he hears the Gospel he will not be able to resist it. (Criticism: How then can they resist God in sin after salvation?)</p>	<p>Resistible Man: Man can at any time resist God, although it comes with a fitting judgment from God</p>
<p>Perseverance of the Saints: Salvation is maintained by faith and God gives man the ability keep on believing until he is received in glory. Works are evidence that one is persevering.</p>	<p>Preservation of the Saints: Once someone is saved God maintains that salvation for them. He keeps them eternally secure in spite of their foolishness in sin (though not without judgment in this life).</p>

3. Challenges of the Age

- **Bibliology**

James and Paul

§618 Because of a perceived difference between the books of James and Romans, Luther held James in low regard. This would affect the debate about whether James should have been included in the Scriptures. He ultimately came to the position that works, as James described them in James 2, were a manifestation only of one's faith.

Sola Biblia

§619 The Bible came to be emphasized to a larger extent than the previous age.

- **Theology Proper**

- **Pneumatology**

- **Christology**

- **Anthropology**

§620 The constitution of man was greatly affected in the debate of free will. The question was over man's ability to respond to God. The ability to exercise faith was considered by the Calvinists to have been destroyed in the Fall. However, people who supported free will saw faith as a function of intellect and emotion which are part of the nature of man.

- **Harmartiology**

§621 The concept of original sin came to take on the character of original guilt because of the return to Augustinianism. Instead of just being a corruption of the constitution of man, Calvinists believed that man was held guilty for what Adam did.

- **Soteriology**

- Antinomianism**

§622 The views of Luther contrary to salvation by the Law were not always clearly communicated. In what was a typical virulent manner, Luther could sound like he was not promoting liberty but licentiousness. Especially because of the way Reformed theology would blend the Old Testament with the New, Luther was pressed This was even to the point that he was pressed to overlook the bigamy of Philip, Landgrave of Hesse, because of concubinage in the Old Testament.

- Salvation as process**

- Perseverance*

§623 Sanctification and salvation are confused under the doctrine of perseverance. It is true that if there are no works that proceed from salvation then it may be concluded that one is not saved. However, the question then becomes how do you prove that someone has absolutely no works at all? This then turns into what is sufficient to demonstrate that there are works. If the proof of being a Christian is that one will persevere to the end, then what if they have *some* failings? At what point is their insufficiency of works a demonstration that they are not Christian? This has led to a sense of hopelessness that one is not good enough to be confident that they are saved. While perseverance does not teach a salvation by works, works are so much emphasized as a proof of salvation that works becomes the basis for salvation.

- Puritan work ethic*

§624 Because of the emphasis on works in perseverance, the Puritans developed a work ethic that greatly benefitted society. Unfortunately, the degree of one's success came to be associated with proof of their salvation. They believed that diligence in one's earthly pursuits and a disciplined life were signs of God's favor and election. This work ethic influenced the development of American culture, emphasizing qualities such as self-reliance, individualism, and the pursuit of success.

- Process*

§625 Since the Calvinists avoided the idea that salvation was by decision, they leaned heavily on the reliance on the drawing of the Holy Spirit. Because people managed to resist God's irresistible grace until they finally couldn't help but to give in, the struggle between guilt and surrender was seen as part of a process for salvation. This

is how the book, *Pilgrim's Progress*, could appear to be Arminian even though it represents a Calvinistic viewpoint. This is also reflected in the debate over Lordship Salvation (p. 270) today where there is an excessive expectation of repentance that makes it seem like one has to have good works to be saved.

• Ecclesiology

Appearance of denominations

§626 With the breakdown of centralized authority, denominations began to develop, first along geographical lines, but then within individual jurisdictions with increasing, although not complete, tolerance.

Church Polity

§627 Church governance over the individual movements became one of the distinctions between the denominations.

Evangelism

§628 Although the renewed emphasis on the *Solas* of the Reformation provided a strong evangelistic message, the adherence to old Catholic notions of infant baptism suppressed a true evangelistic fervor. Salvation was more available for those who were considered already in the church as something to perfect. Outreach and missions were exercised, but the rise of creedalism stifled the effectiveness of the new denominations.

It would not be until the next Philadelphian age when religious liberty would unleash and promote the ministry of all believers in evangelism and outreach.

Baptism and Communion

§629 The stand a church took on baptism and communion became a dividing factor for churches, even amongst those who were similar in the new Reformed theology.

• Eschatology

§630 The papacy and the Roman church was emphasized as Antichrist but the lack of emphasis on the Millennium was typical of this and other previous ages.

VIII . PHILADELPHIA 1750 TO 1950

THE REVIVAL CHURCH

Rev 3:7-13 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia write; These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth;

8I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

9Behold, I will make them of the synagogue of Satan, which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie; behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

10Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

11Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

12Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

13He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

§631 The kingdom of the world fought to develop its control and power in a state church, but God's plans can not be stopped. The Philadelphia church has an open door that no man can shut. The Philadelphian churches will be wildly successful in a spiritual way in contrast to the worldly way when Constantine had provided a political success in the Pergamos age.

§632 With the pressure of political persecution removed after Constantine, the expansion of the church was burdened with the church/state union. The persecution ended because the state was controlling the church from within. The difference in the Philadelphian age was that the political persecution was removed because the state took its hands off the church. The state moved to control itself, leaving the church to control *itself*. The influx of people from the state into the church corrupted it. The influx from the Spirit left the churches to succeed based on how aligned they were with the Kingdom of God.

§633 However, just as freedom and success, even under the state system, weakened the churches in the Pergamos age, freedom and success in the Philadelphian age will contribute to weakening the churches by becoming fat and lazy. This will become apparent in the Laodicean church age that follows.

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Philadelphia

§634 The beginning of the Philadelphia age was about 1750, in the middle of the Revival Movement (1730), the peak of the First Great Awakening (1740), the American Revolution (1775), and the Second Great Awakening (1790-1830). The early revivals certainly characterized the Philadelphia age, but the American Bill of Rights (ratified

1791) because of the American Revolution also helps establish the beginning because it broke any hope for a state authorized or sponsored church. This removed the encumbrances of the previous age that left it stunted in denominational creedalism (p. 212).

§635 1900 is often referred to as the end of the age, but there is regularly no reason given as to why. For our purposes, 1950 as a mark for Post-modernism (p. 264) fits the spirit of the relativistic Laodicean age, which is the end of the Philadelphia age.

2. Character of the Age

§636 The Philadelphia church age had the blessing of being in the position of following the Sardis Age and the benefit of the Reformation. Even though the Reformation was promising, by not having come far enough out of Romanism it ended up petrified with credalism and deadness. Nevertheless, the work done that

broke the hold of the empire state/church opened the floodgates of the Renaissance learning and a great move toward autonomous churches, even though that autonomy was not actualized in that age.

§637 There is a caveat that goes with the rejoicing of the Philadelphia revival age. Having all the factors in place for a revival is not what makes the revival. Having all the advantages of the Philadelphia age did not prevent the following Laodicean age. If the Sardis age was considered dead, the Laodicean age might be likened to being a zombie.

§638 Churches can make the mistake of thinking that all we need is the right formula and circumstances we can have revival as if we can manufacture revival. The end of the revival age of Philadelphia is proof that revival does not depend on formulas and circumstances. The circumstances were certainly used by God in the revival, but we should not forget that God's commendation of the Smyrna church age was not due to them having the right formula or circumstances. They were blessed in the middle of *the worst* circumstances.

§639 The Philadelphia age will serve as a testimony of God's dispensations. We can be in awe of what can happen when take advantage of the door that is opened and we properly walk through it. But, there is a problem that runs parallel to this great revival. While the liberty we have been guaranteed has given us the freedom to evangelize, that same liberty has been given to people to pursue a worldly ideology. When man has every possible advantage for serving God, it is still proven man that will mess things up and that God's grace will be glorified as He steps in and takes over.

• Old Lights vs. New Lights Controversy

§640 The spiritual struggle that were the birth pangs of the start of this age can be seen in the Old Lights vs. New Lights Controversy. This was primarily a Protestant

The Big Idea:
If success depended on a formula,
there would be no end to the
Philadelphia age

issue because Baptists were not a strong factor at the beginning of the Philadelphian age.

§641 The terms "Old Lights" and "New Lights" are historical labels used to describe two distinct groups within American Protestantism during the First Great Awakening in the 18th century. While both groups were part of the larger Revivalist Movement (p. 224), they held differing views on religious doctrine, worship practices, and the role of emotion in religion. This was in reaction to how the churches suffered from the intellectual emphasis from creedalism (p. 212).

Old Lights

- **Doctrinal Conservatism:** The Old Lights were generally characterized by a more conservative approach to religious doctrine. They adhered to traditional theological positions and were often suspicious of new or emotional expressions of faith.
- **Formal Worship:** They favored formal, structured worship services that adhered to established liturgical practices. The use of hymns, creeds, and rituals in worship was common.
- **Educational Focus:** The Old Lights placed a strong emphasis on education and the intellectual aspect of faith. They valued trained clergy and believed that sound theology required rigorous study.
- **Cautious of Emotionalism:** They were often critical of emotional and enthusiastic displays of religious fervor, viewing them as potentially disruptive or even heretical.
- **Opposition to Revivalism:** Many Old Lights opposed the revival meetings and itinerant preachers associated with the Great Awakening, seeing them as divisive and a departure from established church order.

New Lights

- **Doctrinal Flexibility:** The New Lights were more open to theological innovation and embraced new interpretations of faith. They were willing to question traditional doctrines and emphasize personal spiritual experiences.
- **Emotional Worship:** They favored more emotionally charged and spontaneous worship services. Singing hymns, fervent prayers, and emotional conversions were central to their religious experience.
- **Anti-Establishment:** The New Lights often challenged the authority of established churches and clergy. They were willing to break away from traditional denominations and form new religious movements.
- **Appeal to Common People:** They reached out to a broad audience, including those who were less educated, and emphasized that salvation was available to all through a personal relationship with God.
- **Embrace of Revivalism:** The New Lights embraced the revival meetings and traveling evangelists of the Great Awakening. They saw these activities as vital for sparking spiritual renewal and conversions.

§642 Over time, some of the theological and worship distinctions between the two groups faded as they merged or evolved, contributing to the broader diversity of

American Christianity.

Background

§643 The First Great Awakening, which occurred in the 1730s and 1740s, was characterized by religious revivals, passionate preaching, and a focus on personal salvation. The term "Old Lights" was often used to describe more traditional and conservative clergy and congregations, while "New Lights" were associated with those who embraced the revivalist fervor and the emotional aspects of worship. There were a number of key figures.

Old Lights

- **Jonathan Edwards**, a prominent theologian and preacher, is often associated with the Old Lights. While he played a key role in the First Great Awakening, Edwards was cautious about the excesses of emotionalism and believed in the importance of sound doctrine. His famous sermon, "Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God," is a notable example of his preaching style.
- Charles Chauncy, a pastor in Boston, was a vocal critic of the emotionalism and disorderly behavior associated with some revival meetings. He argued for a more rational and intellectual approach to religion, emphasizing education and adherence to traditional religious practices.
- Many leaders of established denominations, such as Congregationalists and Presbyterians, tended to align with the Old Lights. **They were concerned about the disruptive effects of the revivals on their congregations and the potential for division within their denominations.**

New Lights

- **George Whitefield**, an English evangelist, was one of the most famous New Lights of the Great Awakening. He was known for his dynamic and emotional preaching style, which drew large crowds throughout the American colonies. Whitefield's sermons emphasized the need for personal conversion and faith in Christ.
- Gilbert Tennent, a Presbyterian minister, was a leading figure among the New Lights. **He advocated for the "New Side" of the Presbyterian Church, which embraced revivalism and personal experiences of faith.** Tennent's sermon, "The Danger of an Unconverted Ministry," criticized ministers who lacked a personal conversion experience.
- Many itinerant preachers and evangelists who traveled extensively during the Great Awakening (p. 224) were associated with the New Lights. They held open-air meetings, conducted camp meetings, and appealed to a wide range of people, including those less educated.

§644 While the controversy led to tensions and sometimes schisms within denominations, it also contributed to the spread of evangelicalism and the growth of Baptists and denominations like Methodism. Over time, some of the theological and

worship distinctions between the Old Lights and New Lights faded as both groups influenced each other and adapted to changing circumstances.

• **The Revivalist Movement**

§645 In reaction to the consideration of salvation as a process (p. 218), a greater sense of urgency was displayed in the revival meetings. The Revivalist Movement involved periods of heightened religious enthusiasm, spiritual renewal, and mass conversions.

The First Great Awakening 1730-1750 (or 1770)

§646 The First Great Awakening swept across the American colonies. It was characterized by passionate preaching, emotional worship services, and a focus on personal salvation. Prominent preachers like George Whitefield and Jonathan Edwards played key roles in this awakening, which had a profound impact on colonial society, religious diversity, and denominational growth.

§647 The New Lights played a key role in spreading evangelicalism, emphasizing personal piety, and encouraging religious enthusiasm. They held revivals and itinerant preaching, which attracted large crowds

Common terms and phrases included:

- The idea of being "born again" or experiencing a spiritual rebirth through faith in Jesus Christ was central to the teachings of many preachers during the Great Awakening.
- The process of turning away from sin and unbelief and turning toward God in faith was often referred to as conversion.
- The movement itself was often referred to as the Great Awakening because it was believed to awaken individuals from spiritual slumber to a new and vibrant faith.
- Regeneration was used to describe the inward transformation that occurred when a person became a Christian. It was often associated with the work of the Holy Spirit.
- The Great Awakening was a revival movement, and the term "revival" was used to describe the renewed interest in religion and the resurgence of religious fervor that characterized the period.
- People would often share their personal testimonies of how they came to faith in Christ during religious gatherings.

§648 Revivals have occurred over the entire history of the church, but as a modern movement, the First Great Awakening is commonly acknowledged as the start of the Revivalist Movement. That might have been the start, but it is not known to really have an end. The zeal of churches that are evangelistically active in the Laodicean age hearkens back to the excitement of the Philadelphia age spirit. It was in this stage of the Revivalist Movement where its characteristics were quickly developed:

- Revivalism places a strong emphasis on the need for individuals to experience a personal conversion or "born-again" experience. This involves a profound and often emotional encounter with God, resulting in a transformation of one's spiritual life.
- Revival meetings are designed to renew the faith and commitment of believers. They often focus on revitalizing the spiritual lives of those who may have become complacent or distant from their faith.
- Revivalists, typically evangelists, play a central role in these movements. They deliver passionate sermons, often with a call to repentance and faith in Christ. These sermons can be emotionally charged and are intended to stir the hearts of the listeners.
- Revival meetings often include altar calls, where individuals are invited to come forward and make a public commitment to Christ. This public declaration of faith is a hallmark of many revivalist gatherings.
- Music, particularly hymns and gospel songs, is an integral part of revival meetings. It serves to inspire and uplift participants and can evoke strong emotional responses.
- Revivals can vary in duration, from short-term meetings to extended periods of intense religious activity. Some revivals may last for days, weeks, or even months, depending on the degree of interest and participation.
- Revivalism has been embraced by various Christian denominations, including Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, and others. It is not limited to any specific theological tradition.
- Revivals can have a profound impact on individuals and communities. They can lead to increased church attendance, conversions, changes in moral behavior, and even social reform movements.

§649 Revivalism has often generated controversy and debate within Christian communities. Critics may be concerned about the emotionalism associated with some revivals or question the authenticity of reported conversions. Lordship Salvation has been a modern response to any excess in hasty professions (p. 270).

The Second Great Awakening 1790-1900 and beyond

The Period of Deterioration

§650 After the American Revolution (p. 228), spirituality faltered before regaining its balance in the Second Great Awakening.

"Formidable innovations and convulsions in Europe threaten destruction to morals and religion. Scenes of devastation and bloodshed unexampled in the history of modern nations have convulsed the world, and our country is threatened with similar calamities. We perceive with pain and fearful apprehension a general dereliction of religious principles and practice among our fellow-citizens, a visible and prevailing impiety and contempt for the laws and institutions of religion, and an abounding infidelity, which in many instances tends to atheism itself. The profligacy and corruption of the public morals have advanced with a progress proportionate to our declension in religion. Profaneness, pride, luxury, injustice, intemperance, lewdness, and every species of debauchery and loose indulgence greatly abound" (Bacon, *The*

History of American Christianity, chapter XIV, "The Second Awakening").

The condition of Yale College before Timothy Dwight took the presidency in 1795 and the school experienced a spiritual awakening was described as follows by a student: "Before he came, college was in a most ungodly state. The college church was almost extinct. Most of the students were skeptical, and rowdies were plenty. Wine and liquors were kept in many rooms; intemperance, profanity, gambling, and licentiousness were common. I hardly know how I escaped. ... That was the day of the infidelity of the Tom Paine school. Boys that dressed flax in the barn, as I used to, read Tom Paine and believed him; I read and fought him all the way. Never had any propensity to infidelity. But most of the class before me were infidels, and called each other Voltaire, Rousseau, D'Alembert, etc." (*Autobiography of Lyman Beecher*, vol. 1, p. 43).

America was spreading across the North American continent.

- In 1803, the Louisiana Purchase was obtained from France, doubling the size of the United States. The territory stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains. Almost immediately Americans began moving into this region, which eventually added 13 new states to the Union. Louisiana was the first in 1812.
- In 1819, Florida was purchased from Spain.
- In 1845, Texas declared independence from Mexico and was annexed into the American Union.
- In 1846, the Oregon Territory was obtained from Great Britain. - In 1848, the Mexican cession was purchased from Mexico. It included the territories of California, Arizona, Nevada, and Utah.

The spirit on the frontiers was that of ungodliness and irreligion. A lawless, irreligious spirit had taken hold on the American frontiers. More than one million people flooded to the frontiers of Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, and multitudes more pushed farther west, eventually to the Pacific Ocean. The frontier was described as "a population ... transplanted into a wild country, under little control either of conventionality or law, deeply ingrained from many generations with the religious sentiment, but broken loose from the control of it and living consciously in reckless disregard of the law of God" (Bacon).

In New England, apostasy and heresy permeated society and deadened the churches. Church historians called it the period of *Deterioration*. Timothy Dwight, grandson of Jonathan Edwards and president of Yale University, described the condition in New England after the Revolutionary War as follows: "The profanation of the Sabbath profaneness of language, drunkenness, gambling, and lewdness, were exceedingly increased; and, what is less commonly remarked, but is not less mischievous, than any of them, a light, vain method of thinking, concerning sacred things, a cold, contemptuous indifference toward every moral and religious subject."

Unitarianism and humanism were beginning to infiltrate America's churches and popular thinking even before her independence from England. At its foundation, it was an undue exaltation of human intellect and a rejection of the necessity of Divine Revelation. At first it was incipient. It was a subtle form of Enlightenment philosophy and Scottish Common Sense. It attempted to reconcile the Bible with man's natural thinking. Its stated goal was to place the Christian faith on an alleged sounder footing by supporting it from the side of man's rational thought, but this was a rejection of the necessity of faith (Hebrews 11:1, 6) and proved to be the path to apostasy.

(Cloud, p. 310-316)

The Effect of the Second Great Awakening

In the midst of the aforementioned condition that had spread across America, many were praying. God sent revivals that swept across all parts of the nation, though the end-time apostasy also continued as a parallel stream.

Large numbers of churches were spiritually revived. Multitudes were saved and thousands of new churches were founded. "The revivals enrolled millions of new members in existing evangelical denominations." Methodist and Baptist churches in particular multiplied rapidly. Before 1800, most churches in America were Congregationalist, Episcopalian, and Presbyterian. During the Second Great Awakening, the Methodists and Baptists surpassed them. Baptists experienced a growth from a membership of 35,000 in 1784 to 172,000 by 1810 and 350,000 by 1845 (*American Quarterly Register*). Methodist churches increased from 65 in 1776 to more than 13,300 in 1850, with a membership of 2.6 million (Methodist Centennial Yearbook, 1884).

In the 1830s, French diplomat Alexis de Tocqueville wrote the following description of America that testified to the effect of the Second Great Awakening. de Tocqueville's book was extremely influential both in America and Europe.

"In the United States the sovereign authority is religious ... there is no country in the world where the Christian religion retains a greater influence over the souls of men than in America, and there can be no greater proof of its utility and of its conformity to human nature than that its influence is powerfully felt over the most enlightened and free nation of the earth. ...

"I do not question that the great austerity of manners that is observable in the United States arises, in the first instance, from religious faith. ... its influence over the mind of woman is supreme, and women are the protectors of morals.

There is certainly no country in the world where the tie of marriage is more respected than in America or where conjugal happiness is more highly or worthily appreciated. ...

"In the United States the influence of religion is not confined to the manners, but it extends to the intelligence of the people. ... Christianity, therefore reigns without obstacle, by universal consent; the consequence is, as I have before observed, that every principle of the moral world is fixed and determinate. ...

"I sought for the key to the greatness and genius of America in her harbors ... in her fertile fields and boundless forests; in her rich mines and vast world commerce; in her public school system and institutions of learning. I sought for it in her democratic Congress and in her matchless Constitution. Not until I went into the churches of America and heard her pulpits flame with righteousness did I understand the secret of her genius and power. America is great because America is good, and if America ever ceases to be good, America will cease to be great" (Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America*, 1835).

(Cloud, p. 316-317)

Social effects

§651 The revivalist fervor of the Second Great Awakening fueled various social and reform movements, such as temperance, prison reform, and efforts to improve education. Many reformers believed that individual conversion experiences could lead to broader societal transformation.

Restorationists

§652 The region of upstate New York, known as the "Burned-Over District," earned its nickname due to the intense religious revivals and reform movements that swept through the area during the Second Great Awakening. It was a hotbed of religious activity and experimentation.

Extremists took advantage of the awakening to play upon the advances of spiritual zeal to create a cult of their own. They typically condemned all of Christianity to promote themselves as *restoring* it to the way it was in the days of the apostles, or that they were the true church that was going to usher in the Millennium. They included,

- The Disciples of Christ and the Churches of Christ - Predestinarian and emphasizing baptismal regeneration
- Church of Latter Day Saints (Mormons).
- Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints)
- Christadelphians - They reject the Trinity and hold distinctive views on topics such as the nature of Jesus, baptism, and the Kingdom of God.
- New Church Movement (Swedenborgianism) - Emphasizes a new revelation and understanding of the Bible. It includes the General Church of the New Jerusalem and other denominations that follow Swedenborgian theology.
- Various Adventist movements emerged with an emphasis on the imminent return of Christ. Notable groups include the Seventh-day Adventist Church and the Advent Christian Church.

• **The American Revolution**

§653 In between the First and Second Great Awakening the American Revolution occurred. The study of the Christian influence on the establishment of the nation is significant to us because it helps us see how God providentially guided this country. America became the focus of how a country could be blessed when it properly acted in concert with the spiritual.

The Big Idea:
The American Revolution was a key event in breaking open the Philadelphian age.

§654 The pagan Roman government could only unite its pagan culture to the church creating a corrupt universal church. The Reformers only had sufficient vision to

begin to break the bond, but the pieces that were created were only miniature versions of the old. There was an improvement of theology, but the same union of church and state allowed for the accumulation of stifling orthodoxy to pile up. The American government rode on the efforts that were building because of British governance that had been founded on being responsive to the people. Abraham Lincoln crystalized this understanding of government in the Gettysburg Address much later. In describing the spirit for which the American Civil War was being fought, Lincoln identified the essence of government that had been created four score and seven years earlier.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal...we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain – that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom – and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

§655 A true Christian spirit that backed the American Revolution also saw to it that the true relationship between state and church was not one which managed the church with the intent of benefitting it, but one that merely accommodated the church to let it fare as it would by the blessing of God.

§656 The U.S. Constitution is notable for the absence of a state church, but there was no doubt of the intention of the freedom of religion as it was affirmed in the very first Amendment in the Bill of Rights.

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

§657 People often misread this as "the" establishment rather than "an" establishment of religion. "The" establishment suggests that congress can make no law that will be of any benefit establishing spirituality. If "the" establishment had been used, it might indeed suggest that government should not allow any religion to be established or recognized in any way. This could be interpreted as a much stricter form of secularism, where religion is entirely excluded from public life and government interactions.

§658 "An" establishment is a reference to a religious organization or corporation. The framers' intent in using "an" establishment was to strike a balance: to protect religious pluralism and prevent religious discrimination while also ensuring that government itself does not officially promote or establish a state church or religion.

§659 The whole notion of liberty when applied to religion allowed for churches to rise or fall on their own terms, not those dictated or propped up by political actors who take charge of the state. This was the first true break in the history of the world that was consistent with Biblical principles of government. Anything that moves the government to have power over the people by law or regulation promotes the government into the position of controlling freedom of thought.

• **The Revivalists (Second Awakening and beyond)**

§660 There are so many revival preachers or pastors who had an impact on evangelism that it would be impossible to cover them in this study. They would include many from other denominational settings. The ones we will look at are more popularly known across denominational lines, or have been significant to us as Baptists. The work of revivalists continues on through our day.

Charles Finney

§661 Charles Finney was born August 29, 1792, in Warren, Connecticut. He was the youngest of fifteen children in his family. He grew up in New York state and worked as a law apprentice in his youth. In 1821, at the age of 29, Finney had been spiritually concerned and, coming across a Bible, started to read it. After an extended spiritual struggle, he surrendered his heart to God and experienced a profound religious conversion.

§662 In 1824, he was licensed to preach by the Presbytery of Cayuga. He became a prominent revivalist and evangelist, conducting numerous revival meetings and evangelistic campaigns throughout the United States during the early to mid-19th century. In 1835, Finney became a professor of theology at Oberlin College in Oberlin, Ohio. He later served as the college's president from 1851 to 1866. Finney authored several influential books and publications, including "Lectures on Revivals of Religion" (1835) and "Systematic Theology" (1846).

§663 He was known for his enthusiastic preaching style, use of "new measures" in revivalism, and emphasis on personal decision and immediate conversion.

He passed away August 16, 1875 in Oberlin, Ohio.

Despite theological debates and criticisms surrounding his methods, Finney's influence on American Christianity during the 19th century was substantial. He is often associated with the development and popularization of what will be called Decisionism (p. 264) in the next Laodicean church age. Decisionism is an approach to evangelism that emphasizes the importance of a specific moment of conscious decision or commitment to accept Jesus Christ as Savior. There are a number of principles he introduced to evangelism.

- Charles Finney's revival meetings and evangelistic preaching were characterized by an urgent call for individuals to make an immediate decision for Christ. He believed that people could be converted and experience a transformation of their lives through a single, decisive act of faith.
- Finney was known for implementing what were called "new measures" in revival meetings. These measures included techniques designed to elicit emotional responses and decisions from attendees. For example, he would often use emotionally charged language and vivid descriptions of heaven and hell to persuade individuals to make a decision for Christ.
- Finney introduced practices such as the "anxious bench" or "mourner's bench," where individuals seeking salvation would come forward during a meeting to publicly express their desire for conversion. This practice laid the foundation for what would later become the modern "altar call," where individuals are invited to

come forward to make a decision for Christ during a church service or revival meeting.

- Finney taught that individuals could have immediate assurance of their salvation based on their decision and the sincerity of their faith. This teaching contributed to the idea that salvation could be an instantaneous and certain experience.
- Finney emphasized human responsibility in the process of salvation. He believed that individuals had the ability to choose Christ and were accountable for their response to the gospel message.

§664 His methods and teachings have also been the subject of theological debate and critique. Some have raised concerns about the potential for emotional manipulation and the simplification of the gospel message in his approach.

D.L. Moody

§665 Dwight Lyman Moody was born on February 5, 1837, in Northfield, Massachusetts. He grew up in a poor family and had little formal education, leaving school at a young age to work and help support his family. Moody experienced a conversion to Christianity at the age of 17 when he attended a Sunday School class in Boston taught by Edward Kimball, a shoe salesman who shared the Gospel with him.

As a young man in Boston, Moody was known for his rough and undisciplined behavior. He was not a Christian and had little interest in religion. Kimball, Moody's Sunday School teacher, had been praying for Moody's salvation for some time. Kimball deeply cared for the spiritual well-being of his young pupil.

One day, in 1855, Kimball decided to visit Moody at the shoe store where he worked. He felt a strong prompting to share the Gospel with Moody. He began a conversation with Moody, expressing his concern for Moody's soul and sharing the message of God's love and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. Moody was deeply moved by Kimball's earnestness and love, as well as the message of salvation.

Moody walked down the streets of Boston, feeling a growing conviction about his need for Christ. He described this as a period of inner turmoil and struggle. Eventually, Moody went to a nearby church, where he had a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and committed his life to Him. He experienced a profound sense of peace and forgiveness.

§666 He became actively involved in the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) and began to develop his skills as a speaker and evangelist. He moved to Chicago in the and worked as a shoe salesman. During this time, he became deeply committed to his Christian faith and began to hold street meetings and Sunday School classes.

Moody's evangelistic ministry gained prominence in the late 1860s and 1870s when he started conducting large-scale revival meetings and campaigns in various cities in the United States and the United Kingdom. He collaborated with musicians like Ira D. Sankey, and together they popularized hymns and gospel songs as an integral part of their meetings.

Moody's preaching style was simple, direct, and focused on personal conversion. He had a gift for connecting with ordinary people and presenting the Gospel message in a way they could understand.

In 1870, Moody founded the Illinois Street Church in Chicago, which later became the Chicago Avenue Church. He also established the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago in 1886, which focused on training pastors and Christian workers.

Moody's evangelistic campaigns and preaching tours took him around the world, including the United Kingdom, Europe, Australia, and North America.

Finney and Moody Compared

§667 As revivalists go, one thing they had in common was their passion for the Gospel. However, their differences account for the fact that God will use whoever surrenders to His will.

The Big Idea:
Revival is dependent on surrender,
not a formula.

- Finney had a strong intellectual background before his conversion. He was trained as a lawyer and held a deep interest in theology and philosophy.
- His theology was influenced by his belief in moral government theology, which emphasized the moral agency of humans and the idea that God governs the universe based on moral principles.
- Finney's preaching was characterized by logical and systematic arguments. He often used persuasive and intellectual methods to appeal to his audiences, presenting a clear theological framework.
- He emphasized the use of "New Measures" in evangelism, which included the use of altar calls and emotional appeals, but he also incorporated intellectual elements into his revival meetings.
- Moody had limited formal education and was largely self-taught in matters of theology and Scripture. He did not have the same level of formal intellectual training as Finney.
- Moody's preaching style was more direct and simple compared to Finney's more systematic and intellectual approach. He often used personal anecdotes and straightforward language to communicate the Gospel.
- While Moody may not have had the formal intellectual training of Finney, he had a remarkable ability to connect with ordinary people and present the message of salvation in a way that resonated with them.
- Moody's emphasis was on the practical application of faith and personal conversion rather than theological debate.

For an interesting article on their two ministries, go to cslewisinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/KD-2004-Winter-Revival-Series-Great-Evangelists-in-a-Golden-Era-450.pdf

Others

Reuben Archer Torrey (1856-1928)

§668 Reuben Torrey was a prominent American evangelist, pastor, and Bible scholar. He served as the superintendent of the Moody Bible Institute in Chicago and was known for his dynamic preaching and extensive teaching on biblical topics.

Torrey conducted large-scale revival meetings in various parts of the United States and around the world. **He emphasized the importance of systematic Bible study and authored several influential books on Christian doctrine and apologetics.**

Wilbur Chapman (1859-1918)

§669 Wilbur Chapman was an American Presbyterian evangelist known for his passionate preaching and effective revival campaigns. He served as the pastor of prominent churches in Philadelphia and New York City.

Chapman's evangelistic efforts led to numerous conversions, and he collaborated with musicians like Charles Alexander to introduce hymns and gospel songs into his revival meetings. He played a significant role in the religious revival of the early 20th century.

Sam Jones (1847-1906)

§670 Sam Jones was a Southern American Methodist evangelist **known for his fiery and humorous preaching style.** He conducted revival meetings across the southern United States.

Jones's down-to-earth approach and humor made him a beloved figure in the South. He emphasized personal conversion and holiness, and his campaigns were instrumental in revitalizing religious fervor in the region.

George R. Stuart (1860-1929)

§671 George Stuart was an American Presbyterian evangelist and pastor who conducted successful revival meetings in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. He served as the pastor of influential churches in New York City.

Stuart's evangelistic efforts led to significant spiritual awakenings in the churches he served. **He was known for his expository preaching and emphasis on the necessity of personal faith in Christ.**

W. E. Biederwolf (1867-1939)

§672 William Edward Biederwolf was an American Presbyterian evangelist and pastor who conducted revival campaigns across the United States and internationally. **He was also involved in educational and religious organizations.**

Biederwolf's evangelistic work drew large crowds, and he was particularly influential in the early 20th-century revival movement. He emphasized the importance of personal faith and commitment to Christ.

Billy Sunday (1862-1935)

§673 Billy Sunday was a famous American evangelist **known for his energetic and athletic preaching style**. He conducted revival meetings in various parts of the United States and was particularly popular during the early 20th century.

Sunday's revival campaigns drew massive crowds, and he is credited with thousands of conversions. He addressed social and moral issues in his sermons and **played a significant role in the temperance movement, advocating for the prohibition of alcohol**.

From Kimbal to Billy

§674 It was the year 1858 in the city of Boston. Edward Kimball was a young Sunday School teacher who made it a habit to personally give each student in his class an opportunity to accept Christ as their Savior. He was concerned about one of his students who worked in a shoe store. One day, Kimball visited the young man at the store where he found him in the back stocking shelves, and led him to Christ. That student was Dwight L. Moody left the shoe business to become one of the greatest evangelists of all time.

Moody became an international speaker and toured the British Isles. He preached in a little chapel pastored by a young man named Frederic Meyer. In his sermon, he told the story of his Sunday School teacher. That message changed Pastor Meyer's ministry, inspiring him to become an evangelist like Moody.

Meyer eventually preached in America, in Northfield, MA where a young preacher heard him say, "If you are not willing to give up everything for Christ, are you willing to be made willing?" That remark led J. Wilbur Chapman to respond to God's call on his life.

Wilbur Chapman went on to become an effective evangelist. He enlisted the help of a volunteer named Billy Sunday who helped him set up for his crusades.

Billy Sunday learned how to preach by watching Chapman and eventually took over Chapman's ministry, becoming a dynamic evangelist. Billy Sunday's preaching brought thousands to Christ.

Inspired by a Billy Sunday Crusade in Charlotte, NC, a group of Christian men dedicated themselves to reaching their city for Christ. They invited an evangelist Mordecai Ham, who himself had been inspired by the preaching of Billy Sunday, to come and hold a series of evangelistic meetings. The year was 1932. A local farmer loaded his pick-up truck with neighbors and brought them to the meetings. One was a 16 year old boy who sat in the crowd each night spellbound by the message. Each evening the preacher seemed to be shouting and waving his finger at the young man. Night after night, the teenager came and finally on the last night, he went forward and gave his life to Christ. That teenager was Billy Graham.²⁵

• Baptist Associations

²⁵Billy Graham created some serious concerns at the end of his ministry and life. However, especially in his earlier ministry he had a strong evangelistic effect. In broad circles, he represents revivalistic ministry that is associated with Gospel preaching.

§675 At this point we will leave the history of most denominations except as they interact with Baptists. It would be more profitable to study them more completely in the context of modern church history.

§676 Baptists, because of their distinctives (p. 204), do not form denominations. People will unjustifiably refer to the "Baptist denomination," but the proper reference should be Baptist associations. A denomination refers to an outside agency having authority over a member church. Associations have rules for managing joint efforts, but they have no authority over the member churches. Whether a church is dismissed or not from an association, it always maintains its autonomy. Some *have* mistaken *social pressure* for authority. Baptists typically form according to working relations or splits from other associations. A list of 210 associations in the world are named on wikipedia. According to wikipedia, there are 56 national associations in the United States. There are many more regional associations and informal associations. A list of associations in America include:

The Big Idea:
Baptists are not properly a denomination. They do form associations for cooperative efforts.

<p>Alliance of Baptists American Baptist Assoc. American Baptist Churches in the USA Assoc. of Reformed Baptist Churches of America Assoc. of Welcoming and Affirming Baptists Baptist Bible Fellowship International Baptist Missionary Assoc. of America Central Baptist Assoc. Christian Unity Baptist Assoc. Conservative Baptist Assoc. of America Continental Baptist Churches Converge (formerly Baptist General Conference) Cooperative Baptist Fellowship Enterprise Assoc. of Regular Baptists Free Will Baptist Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship Fundamental Baptist Fellowship Assoc. Fundamental Baptist Fellowship of America General Assoc. of Baptists General Assoc. of General Baptists</p>	<p>General Assoc. of Regular Baptist Churches General Conference of the Evangelical Baptist Church, Inc. General Six-Principle Baptists Independent Baptist Church of America Independent Baptist Fellowship International Independent Baptist Fellowship of North America Institutional Missionary Baptist Conference of America Interstate & Foreign Landmark Missionary Baptist Assoc. Landmark Baptists Liberty Baptist Fellowship National Assoc. of Free Will Baptists National Baptist Convention of America, Inc. National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. National Baptist Evangelical Life and Soul Saving Assembly of the U.S.A. National Missionary Baptist Convention of America National Primitive Baptist Convention of</p>	<p>the U.S.A. North American Baptist Conference Old Regular Baptist Old Time Missionary Baptist Original Free Will Baptist Convention Primitive Baptist Universalists Primitive Baptists Progressive National Baptist Convention Reformed Baptist Regular Baptist Separate Baptist Separate Baptists in Christ Seventh Day Baptist General Conference Southern Baptist Convention Southwide Baptist Fellowship Sovereign Grace Baptists Two-Seed-in-the-Spirit Predestinarian Baptists United American Free Will Baptist Church United American Free Will Baptist Conference United Baptist World Baptist Fellowship</p>
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§677 Of these listed, over half were formed since the Fundamentalist/Modernist Controversy (p. 254). Of specific interest for our study is a line of conventions that led to the controversy because it has defined modern Baptist "camps" in our day.

By 1814, Baptists formed the Triennial Convention (because it met every three years) for missionary endeavors.

In 1845, Baptist in the southern United States became concerned over the negligence of home missions and other issues and separated forming the Southern Baptist Convention. The Triennial Convention ceased operation forming the American Baptist

Missionary Union, made up largely of northern Baptist Churches. Of significance is the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec (f. 1880) which was closely allied with the northern Baptists in America.

In 1907, the Northern Baptist Association (its latest name is the American Baptist Churches USA) was founded out of the Triennial Convention especially because of financial organization considerations and with a lot of funding from John D. Rockefeller.

By 1920, the stage was set for the cross denomination Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy with the Southern Baptist Convention, the Northern Baptist Convention, the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec, in the thick of the controversy.

The history of the controversy will be considered separately (p. 254).

• **The Charismatic movement**

§678 While we are not covering the broader developments within Protestantism and other church movements, it is important to understand the historical lineage of the charismatic movement due to its significance in contemporary church history.

In this context, Methodists had distanced themselves from their Anglican origins. One of John Wesley's teachings centered on the idea of sanctification, whereby individuals could progress to a state of being beyond temptation, referred to as "entire sanctification." It's worth noting that Wesley himself did not claim to have achieved this state.

§679 In the later Holiness Movement, which emerged during the early 19th century, there was a belief that some individuals had indeed attained this level of sanctification. This belief laid the groundwork for what would become the Pentecostal Holiness Movement, as it was perceived as a "second blessing" or "a second work of grace" from the Holy Spirit. The origins of the charismatic movement can be traced to the Azusa Street Revival in Los Angeles, CA. It was within this revival that the charismatic movement is recognized to have begun around 1906. This movement began associating this "second blessing" with the manifestation of speaking in tongues.

§680 As the Pentecostal movement developed and grew, speaking in tongues became a distinctive feature and focus. Early Pentecostal leaders and congregations emphasized the experience of speaking in tongues as evidence of the baptism in the Holy Spirit. This emphasis set Pentecostalism apart from other Holiness groups and denominations.

See p. 84 for a discussion on the sign of tongues in its original context.

• **Dispensationalism**

A Sermon on the Dispensations

(see the chart on p. 244)

§681 If you have been around churches very long, you know that although the return of Jesus Christ in the end of time is not as theologically significant as the doctrine of salvation, it is probably the second most passionate issue you'll find in churches. The events surrounding the return of Christ in the theology of last things are so exciting.

However, the teaching of the end times has to be considered in the context of God's overall plan. The doctrines of the end times represent the ultimate vindication of God's righteous. All through history, mankind has rejected God, but it did not stop God from revealing more of His plan of the ages.

Rom 3:3-4 For what if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect?

4God forbid: yea, let God be true, but every man a liar; as it is written, **That thou mightest be justified in thy sayings, and mightest overcome when thou art judged.**

§682 They end times are the *ultimate* vindication – God has presented His plan each step of the way through history, mankind rejected His plan each step of the way, and God will say in the end, "I told you what I was going to do...now, there, I did it. You built your world on lies, fabrication, and assumptions, and none of you could maintain and fulfill your version of righteousness." Even though people reject the sovereignty of God because they want to be sovereign in their own life, even though they choose to not believe, even though they refuse to examine truth, God will be vindicated. He will be justified in all that He has said. Ultimately it will be said that He tried to tell us, but we would not listen.

§683 You start in Genesis with the creation and work your way through the Bible with the fall and redemption and end up in the Revelation with the restoration.

§684 Along the way, God has worked with man through distinctive periods in history that form the framework through which God relates to mankind. We call these ages dispensations because they identify how God dispensed, or administrated, His plan in each age. Each successive age brings out more of God's plan. At the end of each age, man fails and proves that He needs a savior. In each next age, God gives man more power, only for man to fail again. God proves that no matter how much more power man receives, it is never enough – man needs a savior. In each dispensation or age, there is some new level of accountability that man has as God reveals more of His plan to present His sovereignty and salvation.

The Dispensation of Innocense.

§685 The first dispensation was the Age of Innocense in the garden of Eden. Mankins was given one responsibility, to love God and live in fellowship – to simply obey. Man by himself would not obey. Because of his failure, he was cast out of the garden. As he fled the garden, he did so with an atonement, a covering made for him. An animal that shed its blood to make that covering was representative of the One Who would shed His blood for the sin of man.

The Dispensation of Conscience.

§686 After that man lived in the Age of Conscience. He had come to know good and evil and was tested to show that he was not able to obey God merely by conscience. He had no Torah, no Beatitudes, no Old or New Testament. When left to his own choice between right and wrong, man failed.

Gen 6:5,8 And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that* every imagination of the thoughts of his heart *was* only evil continually.
8But Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.

Gen 6:12-14 And God looked upon the earth, and, behold, it was corrupt; for all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth.

13And God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me; for the earth is filled with violence through them; and, behold, I will destroy them with the earth.

14Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch.

§687 By God's grace, an ark was prepared for Noah and his family. There was only one door in that ark and God controlled it. That door foreshadowed Jesus Christ, the door by which we must enter into the fold of God.

The Dispensation of Government.

§688 Next came the Age of Government. Instead of being judged by one's conscience, now man would be accountable to man. Whereas Cain was accountable to God, no man being allowed to touch him, now *man* would have to bear that responsibility. Man would become completely responsible to man.

Gen 9:5-7 And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man's brother will I require the life of man.

6Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man.

7And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein.

§689 But man failed to heed God. Instead of bringing forth abundantly in the earth, he created a central place to live in defiance of God's command.

Gen 10:8-10 And Cush begat Nimrod: he began to be a mighty one in the earth.

9He was a mighty hunter before the LORD: wherefore it is said, Even as Nimrod the mighty hunter before the LORD.

10And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.

§690 Instead of protecting the life of man, Nimrod became a hunter of men. He led humanity to build a tower to rally themselves against the will of God.

Gen 11:4And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top *may reach* unto heaven; let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.

§691 But God came down, confused their language, and scattered them across the earth anyway.

The Dispensation of Promise.

§692 Then God called for a man who would bring in the Age of Promise. God called Abraham out of Ur of the Chaldees and established His covenant with him. At the end of the age, we find Israel a little too comfortable down in Egypt. Instead of receiving the testimony of God, Israel had to be enslaved and Egypt judged so that they would come out. At the end of that time, God gave them the Tabernacle and His glorious presence.

The Dispensation of the Law.

§693 Next came the Dispensation of the Law. The new responsibility was to live by the law. Paul explains this in Romans 7:

Rom 7:10,12 And the commandment, which *was ordained* to life, I found *to be* unto death.

12Wherefore the law *is* holy, and the commandment holy, and just, and good.

§694 The law could not save in and of itself. Had the Jews followed the law, they would still need to have the Savior come to take the sins of the world. The law brought a new level of accountability.

Rom 3:19-20 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin.

§695 Simple obedience was gone, Conscience had failed, Government had set itself against God, the option on the promise had not been exercised, and now the Law would be abused.

Rom 10:1-4 Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.

2For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.

3For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.

4For Christ *is* the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Their abuse of the law was to seek to establish their own righteousness rather than turn to Jesus the remedy for their failure before the law.

The Dispensation of Grace.

§696 The failure of Israel would bring in the Dispensation of Grace and Age of the Church. It is by grace that we have this age because the next thing that was expected was the Millennium. We have this age to bring in the fulness of the Gentiles. This next level of accountability was established by the appearance of the Messiah who made the actual atonement for sin. The expanded responsibility was to take the full message of God's Word to all the world bringing Jew and Gentile together into God's next expansion of the kingdom. This is the point we are at now, where in spite of valiant efforts and submission to revival, the church is becoming watered down and the failure of man in this dispensation will end in the tribulation that is around the corner.

The Dispensation of the Millennial Reign.

§697 Finally, we will arrive at the Millennial Reign of Christ. Man having failed with greater and greater revelation, Jesus Christ will ultimately take His place as the King of kings in a thousand year rule. It will be incredible that even with Christ on earth there will be failure by man.

Rev 20:1-8 And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand.

2And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

3And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

4And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I saw* the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received *his* mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.

...

7And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison,

8And shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the sand of the sea.

Eternity.

§698 In the absolute end, the earth will be purged and we will enter into eternity with all things restored and no possibility of failure again.

Rev 21:1-4 And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

2And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

3And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

4And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

§699 The different dispensations do not present separate ways of salvation. In each of them man is reconciled to God in only one way, through the work of Christ on the cross, whether it be by looking forward to the cross or looking back on the cross. Before the cross, man was saved on the basis of Christ's atoning sacrifice to come, through believing the revelation given up to that point. After the cross, man has been saved by believing on the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom revelation and redemption have been consummated. On man's part, the continuing requirement is obedience to the revelation of God. This obedience is referred to as stewardship of faith. After all that God has given, is it any wonder why the Tribulation to come will be so great?

§700 Each age presents man with greater revelation of God's plan. Each age provides greater opportunity but also greater responsibility before God. We have so much more information about God's plan than Adam, Abraham, Moses, David and the Apostles had – how much more accountable do you suppose we are because of that? We've had 2000 years to digest God's Word and share with each other. Each age ends with the failure of man to submit himself to God. In the end, God's Holiness will be vindicated and there will be no argument that will stand in judgement of Him. There will be no argument with His judgement of sin and sinners. There will be no fault found in God because it will be manifest that He had truly done all that was possible to bring mankind back to Him. God takes man through these various dispensations in order to reveal to him that no matter what his environment, or circumstances, are, he cannot make himself fit for eternity with God, or Heaven, because man needs a Savior.

§701 It's not as though God will one day wake up and say, "Things are pretty bad, I think I'll purge the earth." It is more like God has been building His case, proving to man that he needs a Savior. Man is given more and more responsibility to submit to God and greater revelation of the salvation God has offered and the world plunges deeper and deeper into sin and rebellion. The Tribulation to come will be well justified.

God has reached out in so many ways, will we heed Him?

A History of Dispensationalism

The following is an adaptation of *A Short History of Dispensationalism*, by Thomas D. Ice

https://digitalcommons.liberty.edu/pretrib_arch/37

§702 The ante-Nicene fathers, laid down rudimentary but clear frameworks for understanding God's unfolding plan for humanity.

§703 Church fathers like Justin Martyr (110-165), Irenaeus (130-200), Tertullian (c. 160-220), Methodius (d. 311), and Victorinus of Petau (d. 304) left behind primitive but discernible schemes of ages and dispensations in their writings. These early Christian thinkers set forth a doctrine of ages and dispensations that, in hindsight, bears

a resemblance to the dispensationalism we encounter today.

The Middle Ages were characterized by a notable absence or subdued presence of premillennialism, literal interpretation of Scripture, discussions on dispensations, and the differentiation between Israel and the Church within theological discourse.

§704 It has shown that for about 150 years prior to the systematic organization of dispensations, an increasing number of theologians were articulating dispensational schemes of Biblical history.

§705 Pierre Poiret's presented a scheme as seen in his six volume work, *The Divine Economy* (1687):

- I. Infancy—to the Deluge
- II. Childhood—to Moses
- III. Adolescence—to the prophets
- IV. Youth—to the coming of Christ
- V. Manhood—"some time after that"
- VI. Old Age—"the time of man's decay" (V & VI are the church age)
- VII. Renovation of all things—the millennium

§706 Isaac Watts (1674-1748), the renowned theologian and hymn writer, dedicated a substantial portion of his literary work to the concept of dispensations. Among his writings, there exists a comprehensive forty-page essay titled "The Harmony of all the Religions which God ever Prescribed to Men and all his Dispensations." Watts dispensational scheme included:

- I. The Dispensation of Innocency
- II. Adam after the Fall
- III. The Noahic Dispensation
- IV. The Abrahamic Dispensation
- V. The Mosaic Dispensation
- VI. The Christian Dispensation

§707 John Nelson Darby (1800-1882) is often regarded as the pioneer of dispensationalism. Although he didn't identify as a systematic theologian, he was renowned for his exposition of "dispensational truth." Darby skillfully synthesized exegetical insights to present the comprehensive narrative of the Bible, highlighting God's divine involvement in human history.

§708 Darby's steadfast commitment to the literal interpretation of Scripture prophecy naturally led to the clear distinction between Israel and the Church. Consequently, it underscored the notion that the expectations and destinies of Israel and the Church were distinct in nature.

§709 The introduction of dispensationalism to North America can be attributed to Darby and other Brethren missionaries before the Civil War. In the aftermath of the war, dispensational teachings found favor among a significant number of Christian leaders. By 1875, its distinctive theological tenets had spread across both Canada and the United States. Dispensationalism's reach expanded through fervent preaching, thought-provoking conferences, the establishment of educational institutions, and the dissemination of literature. As the 20th century dawned, dispensationalism had firmly

established itself as a well-recognized theological framework and rapidly gained prominence as the most widely embraced evangelical system of theology.

§710 At the end of the 1800's. Postmillennialism was the popular view of eschatology, but increasingly things did not appear to be following its optimistic script. Premillennialism seemed to provide a more realistic explanation. The dominate historicist premillennialism, with its date-setting and current events speculation, fell into disfavor, while dispensationalism's "any-moment" view of the rapture provided a more sensible premillennialism.

§711 Second, dispensationalism had a tailor-made answer to a growing technological society. As life became more complicated, so did explanations of God's plan for history in dispensational charts. This era appreciated complicated and logical explanations.

§712 Third, with the rise of liberalism in denominational churches, dispensationalism provided answers to these attacks. Liberalism denied the historical veracity of Scripture with its literal interpretation and dispensational distinctions. Dispensationalism allowed a layman to answer liberal ministers thru Scofield's notes. The premillennial view of the Church Age ending in apostasy appeared to be coming to pass in the rise of liberalism and was very appealing.

§713 Fourth, dispensationalism fit nicely with the growth of verse-by-verse Bible exposition. This was evidenced by the rise of interdenominational Bible conferences such as Niagara.

§714 Fifth, dispensational theology furnished a reasonable explanation for how God could be sovereign over a world that seemed to be increasingly evil. Americans had difficulty retaining postmillennial optimism in view of the Civil War and World War I, the development of slums, immigration, rising crime, big business, and other social conditions related to industrialization.

The Significance of Dispensationalism in the Philadelphia Age

Dispensationalism will be one of the distinctions between evangelical Christianity and liberalism in the Philadelphian age and beyond. It will also be part of the division between Calvinists who through Covenant Theology (p. 208) draw no significant distinction between the ages which is used by some to diminish support for Israel today.

Seven Dispensations

	Responsibility	Man's Failure	God's Judgment	God's Grace
Innocence	Ability to choose	Chose to disobey	Death and separation	Covering for shame
Conscience	Knowledge of good and evil	Thought only evil continually	Flood and destruction	Ark and rainbow
Government	Authority to prosecute	Attempted universal government	Confusion of languages, dispersion	The promised Seed
Promise	Covenant of blessing to Abraham	Settled in the world (Egypt)	Slavery, Plagues and death of the firstborn	The Passover Blood
Law	Covenant of the Law	Legalism (pleasing God only by works)	Subjugation to Rome	The church
Grace	Preach the Gospel of salvation	Legalized and Libertine churches	Tribulation	Some saved from all nations
Kingdom	Rule of Justice	Attack on the City of God	Great White Throne Judgment	The New Earth

• The Fruit of the Enlightenment

Competition for the Freedom of Religion - The Enlightenment

§715 The Enlightenment, also known as the Age of Enlightenment, was an intellectual and philosophical movement that began in the late 17th century and continued into the 18th century (review p. 211). It is often associated with the 18th century and is characterized by an emphasis on reason, science, empiricism, and the promotion of individual liberty and rights. While it *appeared* to seek *greater* liberty in thinking, in its excess it served to *enslave* thinking.

§716 Intellectual arrogance presumes scientific authority assuming that we must all certainly admit that scientists must know more than we do. This promotes centralizing power based on the presumption that all who are in authority must be obeyed because they are smarter than anyone else. This is compounded when people also presume that science is the final authority. However, anyone who concludes that science is ever "settled" on anything does not fundamentally understand the nature of science. In the realm of scientific inquiry, there are no final truths, only our best current understandings based on the available evidence. Scientific theories are subject to scrutiny, peer review, and potential revision as new data and insights emerge.

§717 The ideals of the Enlightenment will have its degrading effect on European spirituality and the degradation of the authority of God's Word.

§718 Any criticism of the Enlightenment can seem like it is anti-science, but it is the *excessive* trust in rationality that will be the chief problem of the Enlightenment. Such trust in science will be used as a weapon against society from this age on out. Hyper-rationality will bring in debilitating doubt and outright denial in churches. It will lead ultimately to doubt in knowing anything and moral relativism in the Post-modernism of the Laodicean church age (p. 264).

The tale of two revolutions

§719 The French Revolution and the American Revolution grew out of the Enlightenment, but along two divergent paths. The

The Big Idea:

The excessive trust in rationality will be the chief problem of the Enlightenment.

The full effect of the Enlightenment won't actually be felt until Modernism comes into conflict with Fundamentalism in the next church age of Laodicea.

The Big Idea:

The fruit of Secular Humanism and Secular Neutrality, limited expression vs. freedom of expression

outcome will be the promotion of the Kingdom of the World that seeks to control thought vs. the promotion of the Kingdom of God that frees thought. This will be reflected in the French Revolution. The French Revolution produced the Reign of Terror that attacked religion. In contrast, The American Revolution produced the free market competition of ideas in America that *allowed* for the ascendancy of Biblical faith *amidst* other philosophies.

The tyranny of the collective wisdom of man

§720 While the intention of the Enlightenment was to liberate man, in its excess it only served to liberate him from God and turn him over to a subservience to governance by the collective mentality of the state. It presents a false equality. The state, as representative of "the people" became the arbiter of morality which was a reflection of "political correctness." Political correctness never seeks to be established by referendum, but by whatever morality a marketing campaign could use to give the appearance of consensus. The trick is to sell the idea that man is responsible to the government instead of man being primarily responsible to God. This is because Government is supposed to represent the collective will of the people and therefore knows what is best.

§721 The Enlightenment produced a Secular Humanism, which has been referred to in U.S. courts as a non-theistic religion. In short, it is a religion that deifies man. In the wisdom of the collective, men end up equally oppressed by the state in a politically correct cancel culture. Licentiousness instead of liberty is the rule, it just depends on which arbitrary morality is selected to suppress the others because there will always be opposing moral standards. This collectivist mindset seeks an equal outcome, primarily a socio-economic one, but also a philosophical one that all must subscribe to. Where the Roman state was used to impose a *legal* authority on the church, the Enlightenment attempted to impose a *philosophical* and *scientific* authority on the church. This could only be done by suppressing the Bible as absolute truth. Europe became "enlightened" with man's wisdom at the expense of obscuring the light of God's Word. That mentality persists to this day.

Secular Humanism and The French Revolution and the Reign of Terror

§722 The secular humanism of the Enlightenment became the foundation for the French Revolution and the subsequent Reign of Terror.

§723 There were three competing *estates* in France. The First Estate was composed of the clergy and the church. The Second Estate was made up of the nobles, aristocrats, and royalty. The Third Estate was made up of the middle class, peasants, and urban workers. Despite its numerical superiority, the Third Estate had limited political influence.

§724 French society, characterized by entrenched inequality and feudal privileges, yearned for reform. The Enlightenment ideals, however, morphed into a collectivist approach that sought not just equal opportunities but equal outcomes for all citizens. The French Revolution, a product of Enlightenment thinking, aimed to redistribute wealth and abolish inherited privileges, resulting in a more collectivist and egalitarian society. France's revolutionaries pursued a collectivist vision of equality, seeking to

level societal hierarchies.

Economic reforms aimed to ensure equal distribution of resources, but often led to centralized control and bureaucracy.

§725 The French Revolution quickly moved to a radical phase which gave rise to the Reign of Terror and the concentration of power in the Committee of Public Safety. This was the success of the Third Estate over the First and Second. The Enlightenment principles of secular humanism led to the repression of religion of the First Estate as well as economic confiscation for "the people" from the First and Second Estate.

§726 The absurd length the Revolution would go to replace religion with science was in the creation of months composed of three metric system based 10-day weeks, which still forced them to add on a few days to pad out the year. This affected religious celebrations as well. The Biblically founded seven day week and conventional calendar was restored quickly after the Reign of Terror.

§727 The Reign of Terror during is a stark example of how the principles of "liberté" (liberty) and "égalité" (equality) were taken to an extreme and resulted in widespread violence, repression, and the suppression of individual freedoms. The excesses of the Reign of Terror were a reaction to the perceived threats to the revolution and an attempt to eliminate counter-revolutionary elements. In the subsequent governments of France, particularly during the period of the Third Republic and beyond, there was a recognition of the need to strike a balance between these principles and practical governance. However, the Reign of Terror reveals the influence of the centralizing and controlling nature of collectivism.

§728 The rise of Napoleon ended Reign of Terror and restored religion, although greatly reduced in power.

Secular Neutrality and the American Revolution

§729 The French experience stands in contrast to the American. Coming out of the American Revolution (p. 228), the American system was based on a Secular *Neutrality*. Secular neutrality aligns with the principle of the secular state which does not endorse or establish any religion while protecting the freedom of individuals to practice their own faith or none at all. In this environment, individuals are equal before the law, but not presumed to provide equal ability or receive equal outcomes.

The fruit of the revolutions

§730 The First French Republic was founded on the secular humanism of the Enlightenment. Its *liberté* and *égalité* are founded on a collectivist equal *outcome* and is thus susceptible to principles of communism and socialism. Freedom of speech and thought faces certain repression as it must submit to the state political correctness.

§731 The United States was founded on the secular neutrality derived from the British ideals of freedom. Its liberty and the *pursuit* of happiness are founded on the individualist responsibility before God. It promotes a free market capitalism that is resistant to communism and socialism. Freedom of speech and thought has been the foundation of individualism.

The effects of the enlightenment

- Secular Humanism over Secular Neutrality
- Individual responsible to the collective over individual responsible to God
- Equal outcome over equal opportunity
- Political correctness over freedom of speech
- Suppression of thought over free expression of thought
- Elitist governance over representative government
- Suppression of faith over freedom of faith
- Spiritual skepticism over spiritual conviction

• The Rise of Liberalism

Excessive Rationalism

§732 With the effect of the Enlightenment, the stifling nature of the rigorous creedalism leftover from ecclesiastical infighting, and the fracturing of the ecclesiastical and political powers, the promotion of skepticism ate at the theological foundation that had undergirded society and culture.

§733 Theological liberalism is concerned with reinterpreting and adapting religious beliefs and doctrines in light of modern scientific, cultural, and intellectual developments. It seeks to harmonize religious faith with contemporary knowledge and values.

§734 Theological liberals often embrace progressive and inclusive theological views, which include reevaluating traditional dogmas, questioning supernatural elements in religion, and emphasizing ethical teachings and social justice aspects of religion instead of soteriology.

Science vs. Religion The popularization of evolution

§735 The exaltation of science, coupled with modern science that had not even scratched the surface of data in nature, resulted in a hasty rush to reconcile scientific knowledge with the Bible. In an attempt to avoid appearing unscientific, church leaders scrambled to concoct theories that would make the Bible conform to evolutionary ideas.

An example of how modern science is no better is described by James Tour in this video: <https://youtu.be/ysEc8SdDLAs>

§736 Evolution is politics, religion, philosophy, entertainment, fantasy...anything except science. The attitude and mentality of propaganda that lies behind evolution is well analyzed in the video, *Inherently Wind* - assets.answersingenesis.org/vid/ondemand/inherently-wind.mp4

§737 The conclusion was that the Bible had to be wrong because science as god had defeated the God of the Bible.

1Tim 6:20 O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust, avoiding profane *and* vain babblings, and oppositions of science falsely so called:

Miracles

§738 The only thing that wasn't allowed as a possibility for the miraculous was the fact that it was a miracle. If a miracle had any value, it was only because there was a plausible scientific explanation for it. If there was none, then the miracle was labeled a myth.

"Contradictions"

§739 When confronted with something that defied easy explanation, they resorted to elaborate denial tactics rather than engaging in deeper textual analysis. And if all else failed, they relegated it to the category of a supposed Bible contradiction.

German Rationalism

§740 As Lutheranism became dominated by creedalism and a deadening orthodoxy, the Pietistic influence (p. 184) was met with resistance. Instead of a pervasive revival, the reaction to Pietism only stiffened the heart of the credal state religion.

...pietism led the current orthodoxy, by this time still less evangelical, into statements so rash as to promote the rise and spread of rationalism. The intense religious enthusiasm and the high moral requirements of pietism, and the stress that it laid on the supernatural as not merely a thing of the past but as a present-day reality, may have directly promoted the spread of rationalism among those who held aloof from its religious influence.

(Newman 2, p. 356).

§741 In the early 1700s, under the influence of Enlightenment thinking, German Rationalism took firm hold in the universities of German and supported by Enlightenment activity and Modern theology going into the next two church ages.

§742 German Rationalism sought to reconcile Christian theology with reason and Enlightenment ideals. It placed a strong emphasis on moral and ethical teachings within Christianity. Many rationalist theologians sought to distill the ethical core of Christianity, focusing on the moral teachings of Jesus and the universality of ethical principles. This shift led to a greater emphasis on practical ethics and ethical behavior in theology.

§743 Some rationalists moved away from orthodox Christianity toward forms of Deism or natural religion. Deists believed in a distant, impersonal deity and rejected traditional Christian doctrines, such as the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. It had a significant impact on biblical scholarship, pioneering historical-critical methods of biblical analysis. This approach sought to understand the Bible within its historical context, challenging traditional views of biblical inerrancy.

Higher Criticism

The Bible is a human creation with a little prompting from God

§744 Higher criticism, also known as historical criticism or biblical criticism, is

a scholarly approach to the study of religious texts, particularly the Bible. The roots of higher criticism can be traced back to the Enlightenment in the 18th century when scholars began applying critical and rational methods to the study of religious texts, including the Bible. This period saw a growing emphasis on reason, empirical observation, and skepticism of traditional religious authority. It seeks to understand these texts by analyzing their historical context, authorship, sources, and literary characteristics. Higher criticism aims to uncover the *human* origins of religious writings, examining them as products of their cultural and historical circumstances rather than solely as divinely inspired texts. It often involves questioning traditional beliefs, identifying textual inconsistencies, and exploring the *evolution* of religious thought over time.

Examples

§745 Higher critics, assuming that the idea of a Savior was too enlightened, presumed that all religion started as animism which evolved with man and civilization to pantheism, monotheism with a judgmental God of the Old Testament, monotheism with a loving God of the New Testament, to a tripartite God who sent His Son with a message of grace.

§746 The Torah was edited in different time periods and was not authored by a single individual, such as Moses, as traditionally believed, but are the result of a complex editorial process involving multiple source documents. JEPD represents four primary sources within the Pentateuch: J (Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly). Each source is thought to have its own distinctive style, theological perspective, and historical context. The JEPD theory seeks to explain the variations, duplications, and inconsistencies found within the Pentateuch by positing the existence of these sources, which were later redacted or edited together to create the final text we have today. For example, In Exodus 17:1-7, the Israelites are thirsty, and Moses strikes a rock with his staff, causing water to gush forth. This account is often attributed to the "Yahwist" source (J). In Numbers 20:1-13, a similar situation occurs, but this time, God instructs Moses to speak to the rock. Moses, however, strikes the rock twice, and water flows from it. This account is often attributed to the "Priestly" source (P). Because water coming from a rock is a common element, it is assumed that it is the same story but from different editorial perspectives. *Or*, we could just recognize it as two separate events that foreshadow Christ being stricken on the cross, never to be stricken again and that Moses messed up the type and was judged for it!

Doubt over faith

§747 The end result of such criticism was to demystify the Bible, a euphemism for denying the inerrancy of the Bible.

2Pet 3:14-16 Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

15And account *that* the longsuffering of our Lord *is* salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

16As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

§748 These theories will prompt the Fundamentalist/Modernist controversy (p. 254).

The Liberal Perspective

§749 After the emphasis of German Pietism (p. 184) on experience, a return to Biblical study and analysis should have been the natural move. However, the impact of German Rationalism and excessive emphasis on rationality led to the rational analysis of *experience* rather than a rational and Biblical analysis of *theology*. The Bible was diminished and treated as a human book, filled with contradictions and only useful for ethical consideration for creating a better society rather than salvation and holiness (see *Excessive Rationalism* above, p. 248).

• Restorationist Movements

Definition of a cult

§750 The working definition for a cult for this study is the claim of authority of extra-biblical revelation. Bizarre behavior, personal manipulation and control, and church practice are not used because there could easily be someone who would think that any of us would fit that criteria.

Neither is it just a question of dependence on *non*-biblical information. Various creedal statements might seem very unreasonable and unfounded, but, again, so would some of our beliefs to someone else.

There is a range of claims of revelation that might be used to identify a cult so that some will be more damaging than others. A study on the cults would be beneficial, but we are only going to include a few especially as they fit into our historical considerations.

God's closure of the Scripture and inspiration serves as a protection from the cults since the Apostolic age because people in their imagination, at best, would have left us with millions upon millions of contradictory dictates from "God." Some groups are clearly cults while other groups might just be cultic in certain aspects.

This age is marked with the growth of cults. As all others have liberty, so have the cults. We should not be so concerned that if only the cults did not exist then people would certainly have gotten saved if only they'd had the true Gospel. This is not necessarily the case. The same heart attitude that drew them into the cult could just as easily drawn them into a church that has bad doctrine.

Except for one Restorationist group, they all qualify as cults, even though this does not have to be so.

Restorationist groups of the Philadelphian age

§751 Restorationist churches represent a unique response to the nature of the

Philadelphian age. They are born of the zeal of revival, the fervor of righteousness, an appeal to the emotional, a differential advantage, and an imagined message from God (with the exception of the Stone-Campbell movement) that gives them a mandate.

Stone-Campbell Movement (c. 1800)

The Stone-Campbell Movement was a response to the religious divisions and controversies particularly within Presbyterianism. Barton W. Stone, initially a Presbyterian minister, and Alexander Campbell, a former Baptist, were influenced by the religious climate and the desire to restore what they believed to be the original form of Christianity.

One of the distinctive features of the movement was its approach to worship and music. Stone and Campbell advocated for a simpler, more biblical form of worship. They rejected the use of musical instruments in worship services, favoring a cappella singing, a practice that continues in some branches of the movement today. They emphasized the importance of adult baptism by immersion for the remission of sins, which they believed was in line with the New Testament model of baptism.

As the movement gained momentum, it resulted in the formation of various Christian groups, including the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), the Churches of Christ, and the independent Christian Churches/Churches of Christ. They believe you can lose your salvation.

Mormons (Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, c. 1820)

According to their foundational beliefs, Joseph Smith received a series of divine revelations, including the Book of Mormon, which they consider to be an additional testament of Jesus Christ alongside the Bible. These revelations, they assert, restored essential doctrines and practices, such as the authority of living prophets, the concept of continuing revelation, the necessity of baptism by immersion, and the hierarchical structure of the church. In their view, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS Church) represents a return to the pristine Christianity of the early Church. They believe in works for salvation.

Seventh Day Adventists (Millerites, 1840)

A key figure in its founding was William Miller, a Baptist preacher who predicted the imminent Second Coming of Christ in the early 1840s based on his interpretation of biblical prophecies, particularly Daniel 8:14. Miller's movement, known as the Millerite movement, gained a significant following and created a sense of anticipation known as the Great Advent Awakening. When Miller's prediction of the Second Coming on October 22, 1844, failed to materialize (an event known as the Great Disappointment), he recalculated his timing and declared 1845 to be the date. Some of his followers, including Ellen G. White, believed that they had misunderstood the nature of Christ's return and the significance of the date. They continued to study the Bible and developed distinct theological beliefs, including the observance of the seventh-day Sabbath and the importance of health reform. This theological evolution eventually led to the formation of the Seventh-day Adventist Church, with Ellen G. White playing a

central role as a prophet and visionary leader. The church was officially organized in 1863. White has been determined to have borrowed from other writers without attribution. The SDA church believes in works for salvation.

Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Tract Society, c. 1870)

In the 1870s and 1880s, Charles Russell, along with a group of Bible students, began promoting a unique form of Christian theology and biblical interpretation. They emphasized a rejection of mainstream Christian doctrines such as the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and hellfire, while advocating for a literal interpretation of the Bible and the imminent establishment of God's Kingdom on Earth. In 1931, followers of Russell officially adopted the name "Jehovah's Witnesses," emphasizing their belief in using God's name and their role as witnesses to God's purpose. They teach works for salvation. They claim that they do not come from Seventh Day Adventists but their foundational teachings followed from Seventh Day Adventist doctrine.

• The Shock and Disappointment of World War I 1914-1918

The Amillennialist Perspective

§752 As spiritual Christianity bore its influence on society, Dispensational teaching about the immanent return of Christ was not as attractive, especially in Protestant churches that had not been as affected by Revivalism (p. 224). Their amillennialist views were bolstered by the social advances in the world. Amillennialism, as an eschatological perspective, does not emphasize a future earthly reign of Christ in a literal thousand-year kingdom. Instead, they typically believe in a symbolic or spiritual interpretation of the thousand-year period mentioned in Revelation 20.

§753 Amillennialists often interpret the thousand-year reign in Revelation 20 symbolically, representing the entire period between Christ's first and second comings. In this view, they see the growth and spread of Christianity as evidence of Christ's spiritual reign in the hearts of believers and the gradual fulfillment of God's purposes in history. Social advances can be seen as part of this broader spiritual transformation. They believe that the Gospel's impact on individuals and cultures can lead to positive changes in ethics, justice, and human relationships, aligning with God's purposes.

§754 Amillennialists view history as a progression toward a final consummation when Christ returns, and evil is ultimately defeated. Social advances, such as improvements in education, healthcare, and technology, can be seen as contributing to a more peaceful and just world, even if not achieving perfection until Christ's return.

§755 Amillennialists often emphasize the importance of individual and societal transformation through the Gospel, which can lead to greater social justice, compassion, and moral improvement.

And then came World War I.

The War to End All Wars

§756 World War I was a watershed moment in the history of warfare for several significant reasons. It marked a departure from earlier forms of warfare in multiple

ways, largely due to technological advancements, changes in tactics, and the scale of global involvement.

§757 World War I marked a shift towards "total war," where entire societies were mobilized for war efforts. This included the conscription of large portions of the population, war propaganda, and the redirection of industrial production for wartime needs. The war effort involved not only soldiers but also civilians in unprecedented ways.

§758 Unlike previous conflicts, World War I involved a large number of nations from around the world. It was a truly global conflict with battles taking place on multiple fronts, including the Western Front, Eastern Front, Middle East, and Africa. The involvement of colonial troops and resources from various empires added to the scale of the war.

§759 The outcome of World War I led to significant political changes, including the collapse of empires (such as the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires), the redrawing of national boundaries, and the emergence of new nation-states. It also set the stage for future conflicts and the geopolitical landscape of the 20th century.

The effect

World War I was a tremendous challenge to this faith in the progress of both culture and kingdom. European culture, for all its faults, had generally been viewed—together with its American offspring—as the best hope for the world. Now it seemed bent on destroying itself. When America was drawn into the war, liberal Protestants—like their conservative brethren—were divided. A fair number had at least some reservations about America's entry into the war and some of these continued simply to see the issue as war versus universal peace. Many others, however, viewed the war as a struggle for democratic civilization (and hence, in the long run, peace) against autocracy. Those who took this view were subject to the extreme and extravagant enthusiasm that swept the American people generally. For these modernists a war to ensure the safety of democracy and to end war, exactly fit the logic of their hopes for the kingdom.

– (George Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, p. 146)

§760 Millennialism and Amillennialism had been in competition, but the extent of the war served as a challenge to not be so sure that Amillennialist hopes were realistic. Millennialist preaching was bolstered by this.

• Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy

§761 The Fundamentalist-Modernist Controversy characterizes the state of the church at the end of the Philadelphian age. Some who identify the late 19th century and the seeds of the Controversy as the beginning of the Laodicean age are not totally unjustified.

Premillennial and Messianic anticipation

There were several converging issues that led up to the Fundamentalist movement.

- The move away from the centralized Catholic Church with its emphasis on being the Kingdom
- The emphasis on *Sola Scriptura* that moved away from dependence on dogmatic teaching
- Humanism that emphasized the ability of man to study, understand, and interpret Scripture without getting his teaching approved by the Church first
- The popularizing of preaching over rituals and sacraments
- The emphasis on literal interpretation over allegorical interpretation
- De-emphasis of a covenant theological framework due to the revivalist emphasis on personal decisions for salvation
- The development of Dispensationalism (p. 236)

§762 Once Biblical study was emphasized and was out from under the authority of the Roman system that was permeated with dogma, preachers gravitated away from an allegorical understanding and exercised more literal interpretation. Also, with the effect of the Great Awakenings on revival, there was less emphasis on Covenantalism (p. 208) confusing the church with Israel. When these principles were applied to eschatological passages, a more natural understanding of Dispensationalism was applied. Messianic expectation ran high.

The impact of Liberalism

§763 The impact of Liberalism was acutely felt in seminaries and church leadership. Statements of leading liberals were at once bizarre and blasphemous.

Universities and seminaries took the lead in introducing young men and women to liberalism in all its varied concepts and opinions. Some of these institutions of learning actually became the headquarters of the New Thought and liberal theology. This criminal activity reached its zenith as prospects for the ministry were brainwashed and misdirected from the truths of the word of God to the uncertain labyrinth of human speculations, concepts, philosophy, and social reform programs. Leading the liberals and their apostasy from the truth were the theological faculties of the University of Chicago, Union Seminary in New York, Rochester Theological Seminary, Boston University, Duke Divinity School, Harvard Divinity School, Yale Divinity School, Garrett Biblical Institute, Crozer Theological Seminary, Hartford Theological Seminary, Oberlin College, and Western Theological Seminary. Several men were prominent leaders in special positions: among them were Harry Emerson Fosdick of Riverside church in New York and professor at Union Seminary; Walter Rauschenbusch, a church history teacher at Rochester and author of major works on the social gospel; and Shcailer Matthews of the University of Chicago, to whom Baptists should give the credit of liberalizing the Northern Baptist Convention to the apostate status it now occupies under the name of the American Baptist Convention. (Dollar, p. 82-83)

Representative Statements of Liberalism

May we not demand that God shall be required to receive the moral approval of man... it has been assumed that a study of the Bible would adequately prepare one to have a moral life. Nothing is farther from the truth.

If Jesus knew of the tradition of his virgin birth, he never pressed it. After all, who should have decided between him and any number of demigods and heroes for whom such a birth was claimed. It was the church that added these mundane traditions to its gospels.

Of all the slanders men have perpetrated against the most high the [substitutionary atonement]... is the most insulting. No sin cannot be escaped by a bloody sacrifice. Jesus never taught and never authorized anybody to teach in his name that he suffered in our stead and bore the penalty of our sins.

The Christian Church will come to recognize in Buddhism, Confucianism, and Modernism other roads to God. The Christian will treat representatives of these religions as brothers and not as heathen enemies of the faith.

... Fosdick declared that he did "not believe in the virgin birth or in that old fashioned doctrine of the atonement and I do not know of any intelligent person who does."

(Dollar, p. 88-89)

The Niagara Conference series and the Fundamentals 1876-1897

§764 Especially from the time of the Civil War, the Pre-Millennial expectation of the return of Christ was prominent in revival preaching.

With a growing sense of abandonment of the Gospel for the Social Gospel, and the denial of the Bible, preachers poured all the more emphasis on eschatology and the trajectory of history to the Second Coming instead of to a more benign world kingdom where the spirit of Christ existed but not the person of Christ reigning for a thousand years.

The Niagara conference featured preachers from every major circle: Lutherans, Methodists, Episcopalians, Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Baptists. The conference featured an emphasis on eschatology, but as the movement developed and responded to various theological challenges, particularly within American Protestantism, a broad set of doctrines and beliefs known as the "Fourteen Fundamentals" or the "Fourteen Points of Fundamentalism" began to emerge. The first five are known as the *Five Fundamentals*.

- The Inerrancy of Scripture
- The Virgin Birth of Christ
- The Substitutionary Atonement
- The Bodily Resurrection of Christ
- The Second Coming of Christ
- The Historicity of Biblical Miracles
- The Literal Creation Account in Genesis
- The Impossibility of Human Merit in Salvation (Salvation by Grace Alone)
- The Resurrection of the Righteous to Eternal Life and the Wicked to Eternal Punishment
- The Historical Reality of Adam and Eve
- The Eternity of Hell

- The Literal Interpretation of Biblical Prophecy
- The Pretribulation Rapture of the Church
- The Infallibility of the Bible in Areas of Science and History

§765 These fundamentals were chosen because they are foundational and represent doctrines that were specifically under attack by Liberalism. They are not meant to be a systematic theology that is used to organize all doctrine (see p. 4).

The attitude emerging from the conference can be seen from various statements they made:

The literal sense of the Old Testament prophecies has been far too much neglected by the churches and is far too much neglected in this present day and that, under the mistaken system of spiritualizing and accommodating Bible language, Christians have too often completely missed its meaning...

The prophetic words of both the Old Testament and New Testament concerning His second coming will be literally fulfilled in his visible bodily return to this earth in like manner as He went up into heaven: and this glorious Epiphany of the Great God, our Savior Jesus Christ, is the blessed hope of the believer and the Church during this entire dispensation...

When from any cause some vital doctrine of God's word has fallen into neglect or suffered contradiction and reproach, it becomes the serious duty of those who hold it not only strongly and constantly to reaffirm it, but to seek by all means in their power to bring back the Lord's people to its apprehension and acceptance the precious doctrine of Christ's personal appearing has, we are constrained to believe, long lain under such neglect and misapprehension. So vital indeed is this truth represented to be that the denial of it is pointed out as one of the conspicuous signs of the apostasy of the last days...after the long sleep of the church, the wise are at long last rising up and trimming their lamps in preparation for the coming of the Bridegroom.

(Dollar, p. 32-33)

The Battle Is On

§766 In 1907, the Northern Baptist Convention (NBC) was created which coalesced a number of agencies for missions along with the churches of the north from the Triennial Convention. This had the effect of centralizing the power and authority of the Liberal leadership and institutionalizing Modernism.

§767 In 1919, the NBC joined in with the ecumenical Interchurch World Movement, which caused no small alarm for the Fundamentalists in the convention. Fundamentalists began meeting in their own conferences. From 1920-1925 the NBC resisted the efforts and resolutions of the Fundamentalists to remove any Modernist influence in favor of preserving unity. The Modernists retained control of the seminaries and missions and diminished pre-millennial zeal in favor of social action.

The Scopes Trial (1925, p. 248) was engineered to counter the effect of Fundamentalism since Darwinism was a chief issue of the Modernists.

Prominent Fellowships

From 1923 on, various Fundamentalist or conservative organizations sprung up.

- The Baptist Bible Union, 1923-1940s
- The Independent Fundamental Churches of America, 1930, IFCA Canada, 1949
- The General Association of Regular Baptists, 1932. This fellowship split off of the NBC
- The World Baptist Fellowship, 1934. This fellowship split off of the Southern Baptist Convention due to the increased influence of Modernism in the SBC seminaries.
- The Conservative Baptist Association, 1947

§768 Although Fundamentalism thrived in the context of Baptist church movements, its effects have been felt beyond Baptists and included various Protestant denominations and independent churches. Some of the prominent Fundamentalist groups and leaders that emerged during that period included:

- Presbyterians: Within the Presbyterian tradition, the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) was established in 1936 as a response to theological liberalism and modernism within the larger Presbyterian Church (USA). J. Gresham Machen, a prominent Presbyterian theologian, played a key role in the formation of the OPC.
- Lutherans: The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) remained conservative and committed to traditional Lutheran theology, resisting modernist influences. The LCMS continues to uphold a conservative stance within American Lutheranism.
- Non-Denominational and Independent Churches: Numerous independent and non-denominational churches and organizations aligned with the Fundamentalist movement. These churches often had pastors and leaders who were staunch defenders of conservative theology and biblical inerrancy.
- Carl McIntire was a prominent Fundamentalist leader who played a significant role in the establishment of the International Council of Christian Churches (ICCC), 1948.
- Reformed and Congregational Churches: Some Reformed and Congregationalist churches and organizations adopted conservative theological positions in response to the Fundamentalist-Modernist controversy. These groups emphasized traditional Reformed theology and practices.
- Pentecostal and Holiness Movements: While many Pentecostal and Holiness churches focused on spiritual renewal and revival, some also embraced conservative theological positions, including a literal interpretation of the Bible.
- Independent Bible Institutes and Colleges: Various independent Bible institutes and colleges were founded to promote conservative Christian education and to train ministers and leaders who held to fundamentalist beliefs.

The Controversy

Fundamentalism and Liberalism on the European scene

§769 The religious landscape of England was not as conducive to the emergence of Fundamentalism as in America. The American emphasis on freedom of religion and a free church in a free state promoted church growth in a way that was more likely in England and Europe.

In this time period, although there were revivals that took place in Europe, the effect

of Fundamentalism, missions, and evangelism had no place of prominence. Theological liberalism, influenced by Enlightenment ideas, gained prominence in continental European theological institutions. Scholars such as Friedrich Schleiermacher in Germany and Albert Réville in France sought to reinterpret Christian theology in light of modern philosophy and historical-critical methods. The only significant contribution from the continent was the liberalizing effect of Karl Barth in Switzerland for Neo-Orthodoxy.

Neo-Orthodoxy 1919-1968

§770 Neo-orthodoxy emerged as a response to liberal theology. Neo-orthodox theologians aimed to reassert the authority of Scripture while engaging with modern intellectual challenges, bridging the gap between evangelicalism and liberalism. Neo-orthodoxy emphasized the transcendence of God and the need for a radical re-engagement with the biblical text. However well intentioned Karl Barth was, Neo-orthodoxy was criticized by Fundamentalism:

- Fundamentalists emphasized the absolute inerrancy and infallibility of Scripture, believing that the Bible is entirely free from error in all matters, including historical, scientific, and theological. Neo-orthodox theologians, on the other hand, often held a more nuanced view of Scripture. They acknowledged the presence of human elements and interpretations in the Bible and focused on encountering the living Word of God through the text. Fundamentalists criticized Neo-orthodoxy for what they saw as a diminished view of biblical inerrancy.
- Neo-orthodoxy placed a strong emphasis on the personal and subjective encounter with God through Scripture, emphasizing the importance of faith and existential experience. Fundamentalists, while valuing personal faith, were wary of excessive subjectivity and sought a more objective interpretation of Scripture, grounded in the belief that the Bible conveyed clear and propositional truths.
- Neo-orthodox theology was often seen by Fundamentalists as being too ambiguous or open to multiple interpretations. Fundamentalists criticized Neo-orthodoxy for what they perceived as a lack of doctrinal clarity and a tendency to prioritize existential experience over doctrinal precision.
- Some Fundamentalists criticized Neo-orthodoxy's reliance on existentialist philosophy, particularly its emphasis on the individual's subjective experience and encounter with God. They argued that this philosophical framework could lead to relativism and theological ambiguity.
- Neo-orthodoxy's understanding of Christ, particularly in the theology of Karl Barth, was criticized by some Fundamentalists. Barth's view of the "Word of God" as an event rather than a fixed text and his emphasis on the "wholly other" nature of God raised concerns among Fundamentalists, who often held more traditional Christological views.

Although Emergent Church leaders do not reference the influence of Neo-Orthodoxy, they are compatible with it (p. 268).

Evangelicalism in England:

§771 Modern evangelicalism, characterized by its emphasis on the authority of Scripture, personal conversion, and an active engagement with society, was shaped by figures like John Wesley and George Whitefield who led the Methodist movement, fostering a revival that transcended denominational boundaries. This evangelical revival not only revitalized the Church of England but also gave rise to numerous dissenting denominations and missionary societies. The Clapham Sect, a group of evangelical Anglicans, championed social reform movements, including the abolition of the slave trade.

Fundamentalism and the Downgrade Controversy:

§772 As the 19th century gave way to the 20th, theological debates intensified within English Protestantism. The Downgrade Controversy, closely associated with Charles Spurgeon, one of England's most influential Baptist preachers, revealed tensions between traditional orthodoxy and emerging modernist trends. Spurgeon's staunch defense of biblical inerrancy and his critique of theological liberalism foreshadowed the broader Fundamentalist-Modernist conflict in the United States. While not as extensive as in America, English fundamentalism developed as a response to perceived theological compromises and shifts in mainstream Protestant denominations.

The Oxford Movement

§773 In contrast to the evangelical and fundamentalist currents, the Oxford Movement, which emerged within the Anglican Church in the early 19th century, sought to revive Catholic traditions and liturgical practices. Led by figures like John Henry Newman, who eventually converted to Roman Catholicism, the movement emphasized the importance of apostolic succession, sacramental theology, and a high view of the Church's authority. The Oxford Movement had a lasting impact on Anglicanism, contributing to the Anglo-Catholic tradition that continues to shape the Church of England today.

• **A new Bible**

§774 For nearly 300 years, the use of the Textus Receptus and the King James Version (p. 195). stood as virtually the only English translation.²⁶

§775 The creation of a critical Greek text by Brooke Foss Westcott and Fenton John Anthony Hort was undertaken to provide a Bible that would reflect Liberal theology more. This was done under the guise of academic advancement, but it proceeded with prejudice. Although the Byzantine Greek texts had been immensely sufficient for establishing confidence in the *Textus Receptus* used for the KJV, the discovery of a text associated with the corrupt Alexandrian school (p. 28) gave Liberals an opportunity to "correct" the Bible. *Codex Sinaiticus*, was discovered by Constantin von Tischendorf about to be destroyed as garbage in 1844 at the Monastery of St.

²⁶A few attempts were made but never gained popularity.

Catherine on Mount Sinai in Egypt. Although it was obviously marked up as unreliable in its time, *Sinaiticus*, Westcott and Hort relied upon it another Alexandrian text, *Codex Vaticanus*, which had been in the Vatican Library. Although two other text types were available, they depended on the Alexandrian texts by holding them superior to all others. Some Dispensationalists declare the creation of the Critical Greek Text in 1881-82 as the starting point of the Laodicean age.

§776 Although *Sinaiticus* and *Vaticanus* often do not agree with each other, Westcott and Hort apparently chose readings that were convenient to their purpose to "correct" the *Textus Receptus*.

§777 The result was the beginning of modern Bible translations starting in 1881 that retain the errors introduced by Westcott and Hort and the doctrinal problems associated with them.

• 20th Century Churches

§778 As the 20th century progressed, evangelistic and revival activity continued with an open door, but not without an emboldened and strengthened opposition. Instead of a corrupted church presenting the opposition, the rivalry would be based on philosophy. The resulting spiritual movement will run parallel under the guise of Christianity through the Laodicean age to create a spirituality that will accommodate the one world church of the Antichrist in the Tribulation.

3. Challenges of the Age

• Bibliology

§779 Modernism's denial of the Bible as inerrant and infallible emerged during this time along with a New Testament Greek text that will be used for modern translations.

• Theology Proper, Christology

§780 Modernism's view of God challenged the very nature of divinity and denied a Biblical Christ.

• Pneumatology

§781 The Charismatic movement altered the work of the Holy Spirit to produce a tongues based claim of the role of the Holy Spirit.

• Anthropology

• Harmartiology

Modernism reduced sin to the idea of mistakes, faults, and social disadvantage.

- **Soteriology**

§782 Soteriology moved from a predestinarian concept to an emphasis on the free will of man to submit to God for salvation.

Modernism proceeded down a divergent path to a social gospel emphasizing the "Christianizing" of culture.

- **Ecclesiology**

§783 Churches distinctly became free and emphasized revivalism.

- **Eschatology**

§784 By the end of the age, Dispensationalism was crystalized and became the dominant force in Fundamentalism, especially Pre-millennialism. Modernism promoted Amillennialism or, at best, Post-Millennialism.

IX . LAODICEA 950- THE LUKEWARM CHURCH

Rev 3:14-22 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

15I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

16So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

17Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:

18I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

19As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

20Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

21To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

22He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

§785 This is the final church age before the Rapture and the Tribulation. It is sealed off just as the other church ages. It ends with a final admonition for us to hear what the Spirit says to all the churches.

§786 This age suffers the complete disapproval of God and will be spewed out of His mouth. It is marked by rampant indifference and relativism. It could be said that everything that should be up is down and that everything that should be down is up. It considers itself to be rich and enlightened, but does not know that it is poor and blind. Within this church age it is still possible to have Christ enter in and there will be those who overcome, but the character of the age is deplorable.

1. The date of the Age of the Church of Laodicea

§787 The further back history is, the easier it is to see the trends that characterized it. This makes it hard to distinguish between the end of the Philadelphian age and the beginning of the Laodicean. There is much dynamic revival activity since the 1950s that clearly is consistent with the Philadelphian age. This also undoubtedly happens in other ages where there would be much excitement and hope as they saw God's blessings in their times. The reason that we use the 1950s as a starting point is because of the landscape of philosophical issues characterized by Post-Modernism (p. 264) that dominate the world and are a major aspect of churches broadly speaking.

2. Character of the Age

• Decisionism

§788 A modern reaction to Decisionism has been what is called Lordship Salvation (p. 270).

§789 Carl F. H. Henry first used the term "decisionism" in the mid-20th century to critique certain approaches to evangelism and conversion in modern American Christianity. He articulated his views on decisionism in the context of his role as a theologian and editor of the magazine "Christianity Today." His concerns centered around what he saw as an overemphasis on making a one-time, emotionally driven decision for Christ without sufficient attention to the broader aspects of Christian discipleship and theological understanding.

Decisionism is a term used to describe a particular approach to conversion and salvation. It emerged primarily in the 19th and early 20th centuries and was associated with certain revivalist and evangelistic movements. Decisionism emphasizes the act of making a conscious and immediate decision to accept Jesus Christ as one's personal Savior and Lord. Key characteristics of Decisionism include:

- A strong emphasis on a specific moment when an individual makes a conscious choice to accept Christ as their Savior. This decision is often associated with a public altar call or a personal commitment during a religious service or event.
- Conversion is typically seen as a one-time, instantaneous event. It is believed that a person can go from being unsaved to saved in a single act of faith and commitment.
- Decisionist evangelism often employs emotional appeals, passionate preaching, and calls to action to prompt individuals to make a decision for Christ. Revival meetings and evangelistic crusades are common settings for decisionist practices.
- Decisionism frequently involves the use of a "sinner's prayer," in which a person is led through prayer to confess their sins and profess faith in Jesus Christ.
- Decisionism often encourages individuals to make a public profession of their faith, such as going forward during a church service or revival meeting to indicate their decision to follow Christ.

Decisionism has been the subject of theological debates and critiques. Some critics argue that it can lead to a superficial understanding of salvation, as it focuses primarily on a single decision moment rather than the ongoing process of Christian discipleship.

• Postmodernism 1950-

§790 Postmodernism is the current treatment of the issue of reality. In context, Postmodernism is the next step of the evolution of subjectivity away from a common sense realism.

- Common Sense Realism²⁷ – asserts the existence of an external, mind-independent reality. **The external world exists independently of our perceptions and that we have the capacity to know it directly.**
- Idealism – asserts that **reality** is fundamentally mental or immaterial, and everything, including the external world, **is ultimately a product of the mind or consciousness.**
- Postmodernism – questions the existence of a single, objective reality and **emphasizes the multiplicity of subjective interpretations. It often challenges the notion of a fixed, external reality.**

Postmodernism is subjectivity on steroids.

- Post-modernism challenges the idea of "grand narratives" or overarching, universal explanations of history, society, and human experience. It questions the notion that there is a single, objective truth that can explain everything.
- Post-modernists tend to be relativists, emphasizing the subjectivity of truth and knowledge. They argue that truth is not an absolute, objective concept but is shaped by individual perspectives, cultural contexts, and power dynamics.
- They use Deconstruction, a prominent technique in post-modernist philosophy, which examines and critiques the underlying assumptions and binary oppositions present in texts and ideas (see also p. 2).
- Post-modernists reject the idea of essentialism, which is the belief in inherent and unchanging qualities or characteristics of things. They argue that identities, meanings, and categories are fluid and context-dependent.

§791 Different post-modernist thinkers may have varying perspectives on these concepts, and there is no single, authoritative text or doctrine that defines post-modernism.

§792 If there ever was a philosophy that describes the Laodicean age, it would be a philosophy that cannot tell whether something is hot or cold or if temperature is just a means to oppress minorities in favor of tepid tea. A woman is defined as someone who identifies with what *they think* a woman is and ends up with someone who is neither a man *or* a woman because the word has become meaningless.

• **Neo-Evangelicalism**

§793 The Neo-Evangelical movement, often referred to simply as "neo-evangelicalism," was a significant development within American Protestant Christianity in the mid-20th century. It represented a departure from the more separatist fundamentalism and sought to engage with the broader culture while maintaining traditional evangelical beliefs.

- Neo-evangelicalism emerged in the 1940s and 1950s, with key leaders such as Harold John Ockenga, Carl F.H. Henry, and Billy Graham at the forefront. The movement was a response to what many perceived as the shortcomings of

²⁷A perspective described by the Scottish Philosopher, Thomas Reid (1710-1796).

fundamentalism.

- Neo-evangelicals sought to emphasize the core theological beliefs of evangelicalism, such as the authority of Scripture, the centrality of personal conversion, and a commitment to the gospel message.
- They were also concerned with the need for greater intellectual engagement and cultural relevance, often advocating for a "cooperative orthodoxy" that allowed for a diversity of theological perspectives within the evangelical fold.
- Neo-evangelicals held to the fundamentals of the faith but were open to a wider range of theological positions than strict fundamentalists.
- They believed in the importance of engaging with secular scholarship and culture, seeking to bring a biblical perspective to bear on contemporary issues.

Fundamentalists' criticisms of Neo-evangelical desire to be "broader" in their approach have been with respect to compromise that such "broadness" entails.

- **Biblical Inerrancy:** Fundamentalists emphasize the belief in the absolute inerrancy and infallibility of the Bible. Some Fundamentalists accuse Neo-evangelicals of softening their stance on biblical inerrancy by allowing for a more nuanced view of scripture that may accommodate elements of historical-critical scholarship or the acceptance of certain errors or contradictions in the Bible.
- **Ecumenism:** Some Fundamentalists view Neo-evangelicals' participation in interdenominational and ecumenical movements as compromising essential doctrinal distinctives. They are concerned that such involvement may downplay theological differences among Christian denominations and promote unity at the expense of doctrinal purity.
- **Doctrine of Hell and Judgment:** Fundamentalists tend to uphold a strong belief in the literal existence of hell and eternal punishment for the unrepentant. They may criticize Neo-evangelicals for downplaying or reinterpreting these doctrines to make them more palatable to contemporary sensibilities.
- **Exclusivity of Christianity:** Fundamentalists often assert the exclusivity of Christianity as the only path to salvation. They may be critical of Neo-evangelicals who engage in interfaith dialogues or suggest the possibility of salvation outside of a conscious faith in Jesus Christ.
- **Social and Political Engagement:** Some Fundamentalists criticize Neo-evangelicals for placing too much emphasis on social and political issues rather than focusing primarily on evangelism and spiritual matters. They may see this as a departure from the core mission of the church.
- **Doctrinal Ambiguity:** Fundamentalists may perceive Neo-evangelicalism as accommodating doctrinal ambiguity by emphasizing "mere Christianity" and minimizing denominational distinctives. They may argue that this approach blurs important theological lines.

§794 Neo-evangelicals are often associated with "worldly" methods or practices in the church's ministry and outreach efforts. This criticism is rooted in concerns about maintaining the purity of the Christian faith and avoiding secular influences. Here are some examples of practices that Fundamentalists may view as "worldly":

- **Contemporary Worship Music:** The use of contemporary Christian music styles is seen as a concession to secular popular culture.
- **Casual Dress and Informal Worship:** Fundamentalists often favor formal or traditional dress codes for church services and may view the adoption of casual attire or informal worship styles as a worldly influence.
- **Marketing and Entertainment:** Fundamentalists may criticize the use of marketing techniques, entertainment elements, or multimedia presentations in church services or outreach efforts as adopting worldly methods to attract and retain congregants.
- **Seeker-Sensitive Approaches:** Some Fundamentalists are critical of seeker-sensitive approaches to church growth, which aim to make church services and programs more accessible to newcomers. They may see these approaches as compromising the unadulterated proclamation of the gospel.
- **Psychological Counseling:** Some Fundamentalists have reservations about integrating psychological counseling techniques and practices into pastoral care and counseling, viewing them as rooted in secular psychology and potentially undermining biblical counseling principles.
- **Popular Culture Engagement:** Fundamentalists may object to the incorporation of elements from popular culture, such as references to movies, music, or celebrities, into sermons or church events.
- **Secular Management Practices:** In church administration, some Fundamentalists may oppose the adoption of secular management practices, such as business models or corporate leadership strategies, which they perceive as worldly and inconsistent with the biblical model of church leadership.

• **Church Growth Movement**

§795 The Church Growth Movement is a movement within Christianity that emerged in the mid-20th century with the goal of promoting church growth and expanding the influence of Christian churches. It is often associated with strategies and principles aimed at numerical growth and increased outreach.

Emergence in the Mid-20th Century

The Church Growth Movement began to take shape in the 1950s and 1960s as a response to concerns about declining church attendance and the need for churches to adapt to changing cultural and demographic trends. Key figures include:

- Donald McGavran, who is often regarded as one of the founding figures of the Church Growth Movement. His book "The Bridges of God" (1955) laid the foundation for many of the movement's ideas.
- Other influential leaders in the movement included C. Peter Wagner, John Wimber, and George G. Hunter III.

Foundational Principles

§796 The Church Growth Movement emphasized the use of sociological and marketing principles to understand and reach target audiences. It emphasized the

importance of "homogeneous units" (people with similar backgrounds and needs) as a strategy for church planting and growth. The movement advocated for the use of contemporary worship styles, innovative programming, and seeker-friendly approaches to make churches more accessible to non-believers.

Church Planting and Growth Strategies

§797 The movement promoted the idea of intentionally planting new churches as an effective means of reaching unchurched populations. It encouraged churches to analyze their local contexts and adapt their ministry approaches accordingly. Many churches that embraced the Church Growth Movement employed marketing techniques, small group ministries, and outreach events to attract new members.

Global Impact

§798 The Church Growth Movement had a significant influence on Christianity globally, particularly through mission work and the spread of megachurches in various countries. Its strategies and principles were adopted by churches and denominations worldwide, contributing to the growth of Christianity in regions where it was previously less prevalent.

Criticisms and Controversies

§799 The Church Growth Movement has faced criticism for its focus on numerical growth at the expense of theological depth and discipleship. Some have raised concerns about a consumeristic approach to church that caters to people's preferences rather than emphasizing the transformative power of the gospel. Some churches and leaders moved away from the Church Growth Movement's methods, emphasizing a more holistic approach to church health and discipleship.

§800 Over time, the Church Growth Movement evolved and gave rise to related movements and paradigms, such as the seeker-sensitive movement, the emergent church movement, and the missional church movement.

• The Emergent Church

§801 The Emergent Church Movement, often referred to simply as the "Emergent Church," was a Christian movement that has emerged in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. It is characterized by a desire to reevaluate and recontextualize Christianity for a postmodern and post-denominational world. The movement emphasized questions, dialogue, and a more flexible approach to theology and practice.

§802 The Emergent Church Movement began to gain momentum in the late 1990s and early 2000s, primarily in North America, as a response to the changing cultural landscape and the perceived inadequacy of traditional forms of church. Key figures include Brian McLaren, Tony Jones, Doug Pagitt, and Rob Bell, among others. Brian McLaren's book "A New Kind of Christian" (2001) and "The Emergent Church" (2004) contributed to the movement's early development.

§803 The Emergent Church Movement emphasized a shift away from doctrinal certainty and institutional structures, favoring a more open-ended and exploratory

approach to faith. It questioned traditional church practices and sought to deconstruct and reconstruct aspects of Christian theology, worship, and community life. The movement was influenced by postmodern philosophy and a recognition of the limitations of modernist approaches to theology and culture. It embraced ambiguity, mystery, and paradox in faith and theology, often rejecting black-and-white, dogmatic positions.

§804 Conversations, dialogues, and discussions were central to the Emergent Church's approach. Leaders and participants valued open conversations about faith, doubt, and spirituality. Many emergent gatherings and events promoted discussion and interaction over traditional preaching or teaching.

§805 Critics argued that the movement's emphasis on uncertainty and questioning could lead to theological relativism and compromise.

§806 Over time, the Emergent Church Movement diversified and evolved, leading to various streams and expressions within the broader movement. The movement has faced internal divisions and waning influence. Some leaders and participants moved on to different forms of ministry and theological exploration.

8. Legacy and Impact:

• Calvinistic resurgence

§807 This movement represents a renewed emphasis on the theological teachings associated with John Calvin and the Reformed tradition.

History

- Late 20th Century: The resurgence of interest in Reformed theology can be traced back to the latter half of the 20th century. Prominent figures like R.C. Sproul, a theologian and founder of Ligonier Ministries, began to articulate and promote Reformed doctrines during this period.
- 1980s and 1990s: In the 1980s and 1990s, Reformed theologians such as John Piper, John MacArthur, and Tim Keller gained prominence. Piper's ministry, *Desiring God*, and Keller's leadership in Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City played significant roles in popularizing Reformed theology.
- Early 2000s: The Gospel Coalition, an organization that promotes Reformed theology and gospel-centered ministry, was founded in 2005. This coalition of pastors and theologians aimed to foster theological discussion and provide resources for a new generation of Christians.

§808 The availability of theological resources on the internet and the rise of social media platforms further accelerated the spread of Reformed theology in the early 21st century. Blogs, podcasts, YouTube channels, and online forums allowed people to access Reformed teaching and engage in theological discussions.

In the 21st century, many new churches and church plants have adopted Reformed theology as part of their core identity. These churches often attracted younger Christians looking for substantive preaching and a more traditional approach to Christianity. Reformed theology gained traction among younger generations of Christians, particularly millennials and members of Generation Z. This demographic was drawn to

the intellectual depth and historical rootedness of Reformed theology.

§809 The Reformed tradition's strong emphasis on biblical authority and ethics drew some Christians who were seeking guidance on contemporary social issues.

Provisionist Reaction

While Fundamentalists have stood against Calvinism and Arminianism, Provisionism has become more defined in response to the Calvinistic resurgence. Basic tenets include:

- **Unlimited Atonement:** Christ's atoning work on the cross is not limited to a specific group of predestined individuals. Instead, they argue that Christ's sacrifice is offered to all people, providing the potential for salvation to everyone.
- **Conditional Election:** Provisionists reject the traditional Calvinist doctrine of unconditional election. Instead, they emphasize conditional election dependent upon man's responsibility, or the ability to respond to the Holy Spirit to receive salvation by faith.
- **Total Depravity:** Provisionists affirm the doctrine of total depravity, acknowledging that all human beings are born in sin and incapable of saving themselves. However, they emphasize that God's grace provides the ability for all people to respond positively to the gospel.
- **Synergistic Soteriology:** Provisionists hold to a synergistic view of salvation, where both God and human beings cooperate in the process. They argue that God initiates salvation, but individuals must respond in faith to accept God's offer of grace.
- **Human Free Will:** Provisionism strongly emphasizes human free will in the decision to accept or reject the gospel. It asserts that individuals have the ability to respond to God's call and are not predetermined to be saved or damned.
- **Prevenient Grace:** Provisionists believe in prevenient grace, which is understood as a divine enabling or empowering that goes before an individual's decision to accept Christ. Prevenient grace makes it possible for people to respond positively to the gospel. This enablement comes by the hearing of God's Word.
- **Evangelistic Zeal:** Provisionism encourages a strong emphasis on evangelism and missions, as it holds that every individual has the potential to respond to the gospel.

See also p. 216.

Lordship Salvation

§810 In response to Decisionism (p. 264), Lordship Salvation has sought to bring in a focus on the serious nature of the decision one makes for salvation.

§811 Lordship Salvation emphasizes the belief that true salvation involves a genuine, life-transforming commitment to Jesus Christ as both Savior *and* Lord of one's life. It asserts that faith in Christ is not merely an intellectual or emotional assent to a set of beliefs, but a total surrender to Christ's authority and a willingness to follow Him in obedience. Proponents of Lordship Salvation stress that salvation results in a changed heart, producing a desire to live a life of holiness, repentance, and submission to God's will. This perspective holds that faith and repentance go hand in hand, with repentance

signifying a turning away from a life of sin and self-rule. Critics, however, argue that Lordship Salvation might risk introducing a sense of works-based salvation, while proponents emphasize the inseparable link between genuine faith and a transformed life marked by a desire to obey and follow Christ as Lord.

Some of the common criticisms and concerns raised by its critics include:

- **Works-Based Salvation:** One of the primary criticisms of Lordship Salvation is that it can be perceived as promoting a works-based salvation. It might place an undue emphasis on human effort, obedience, and good works as necessary components of salvation. They maintain that salvation is solely by God's grace through faith and not by human merit or works (Ephesians 2:8-9).
- **Lack of Assurance:** Some argue that the emphasis on producing visible "fruit" or evidence of salvation can lead to doubts and insecurity among believers. The focus on personal performance can hinder a believer's assurance of salvation, as they may constantly question whether they are meeting the standard of discipleship.
- **Legalism and Self-Righteousness:** It can lead to legalism, where believers become preoccupied with following rules and maintaining a moralistic lifestyle to prove their faith. This can, in turn, foster a sense of self-righteousness and judgmental attitudes toward others who may not appear as outwardly righteous.
- **Overemphasis on Human Response:** Some argue that Lordship Salvation places an excessive emphasis on the human response to the gospel message, potentially overshadowing the central role of God's grace and sovereignty in salvation.
- **Subjectivity in Fruit Inspection:** Determining whether someone's life exhibits the proper "fruit" of salvation can be subjective and open to interpretation. Critics point out that this subjectivity can lead to judgmental attitudes within Christian communities and a lack of genuine understanding of the complexities of individual struggles and growth in faith.
- **Misunderstanding of "Lordship":** Some critics argue that the term "Lordship" can be misunderstood to mean that believers must attain a certain level of moral perfection or that they must fully submit every aspect of their lives to Christ in order to be saved. They argue that such interpretations may misrepresent the biblical teaching on Christ's lordship.

§812 What would truly be concerning to those who promote Lordship Salvation is that none of these criticisms are true with regard to their doctrinal positions. When considering the good and actual intentions of Lordship Salvation, it should be balanced out by God's grace.

• **Critical Race Theory**

§813 The inclusion of Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Marxist ideas in modern churches has been a topic of debate and discussion within Christian circles. It's important to note that views on this matter vary widely, and not all churches or Christian leaders have adopted or incorporated these ideas in the same way. Here are some ways in which CRT and Marxist ideas have been brought into some modern churches:

- **Influence on Social Justice Movements:** Some churches and Christian leaders have engaged with social justice issues, drawing on insights from CRT and Marxist thought. They may address issues such as racial inequality, economic justice, and systemic oppression through the lens of these ideologies.
- **Sermons and Teaching:** Pastors and theologians who are sympathetic to CRT or Marxist ideas may incorporate them into sermons, Bible studies, or teaching materials. They may use these ideologies to interpret biblical passages and apply them to contemporary issues.
- **Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Initiatives:** Many churches have implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) initiatives aimed at addressing issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and other forms of discrimination. Some of these initiatives may draw on concepts from CRT to analyze and address structural inequalities within the church.
- **Educational Materials:** Churches and Christian organizations may use books, videos, and study materials that incorporate CRT or Marxist perspectives to educate their members about social justice issues and activism.
- **Guest Speakers and Conferences:** Churches and Christian conferences sometimes invite speakers who advocate for CRT or Marxist-inspired social justice initiatives to address their congregations or audiences.
- **Denominational Statements:** Certain denominations or church bodies have issued official statements or resolutions that endorse or incorporate elements of CRT or Marxist-influenced social justice principles.

§814 Many Christians view these ideologies with skepticism, raising concerns about potential conflicts with biblical theology, moral relativism, and a reductionist view of human nature.

3. Challenges of the Age

§815 This age will not be characterized by the challenges it faces, but by capitulation to the world.

• Bibliology

The proliferation of modern English translations has continued. It should be noted that from time to time, different translations have been touted as the best improvement. This was true of the Revised Standard Version, then the New American Standard Version, followed by the New International Version and its updated version, Today's New International Version, and lately the English Standard Version.

With all the new versions, the King James Version is still the most trusted English Bible which stands alone in its class.

• Theology Proper

§816 Feminist theology has popularized a female identity for God.

§817 "Process Theology" treats God as evolving and does not necessarily know the future. Process theology posits that God is not static or unchanging but is

continuously evolving and interacting with the world in a dynamic manner. This perspective often includes the idea that God's knowledge of the future is open, meaning that God does not possess exhaustive foreknowledge of every event but rather experiences and learns from the ongoing process of creation. It is a departure from traditional theological perspectives that emphasize God's timeless and unchanging nature, as seen in classical theism.

- **Pneumatology**

- **Christology**

§818 In modern times, various theological discussions and debates on Christology have taken place. These include explorations of the historical Jesus, the quest for the historical Jesus, different interpretations of the atonement, and diverse understandings of the person and work of Christ.

- **Anthropology**

- **Harmartiology**

- **Soteriology**

- **Ecclesiology**

- **Eschatology**

Amillennialism has become more popular.

Hyperdispensationalists have sought to find more divisions. Some have popularized the idea that Christ will return *near* the middle of the Tribulation before a period known as the *Great* Tribulation.

X . APPENDIX 1 - PEOPLE IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

Agabus: A prophet who predicted a severe famine and the binding of Paul in Jerusalem.

Agrippa II: The son of King Agrippa I and Bernice, who listened to Paul's defense and acknowledged his innocence.

Alexander the coppersmith: A man who did Paul much harm and opposed his teachings, mentioned in Paul's letter to Timothy.

Alexander the Jew: A man accused by the crowd in Ephesus but defended by Paul, although his specific identity is uncertain.

Ananias of Damascus: The disciple who was sent by the Lord to restore Saul's sight after his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus.

Ananias, the high priest: The high priest who presided over Paul's trial and commanded those who stood near him to strike him.

Ananias: A believer in Jerusalem who, along with his wife Sapphira, lied to the apostles about the proceeds from selling their property.

Andronicus: A fellow Jew and believer who was imprisoned with Paul and well regarded among the apostles.

Apelles: A believer mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, who is commended for his loyalty to Christ.

Apollos: An eloquent Jew from Alexandria who was well-versed in the Scriptures and taught about Jesus accurately, though he only knew the baptism of John.

Aquila and Priscilla (Prisca): A married couple who were tentmakers and served as valuable co-workers with Paul, mentioned earlier.

Archippus: A fellow worker mentioned by Paul in Colossians and Philemon, who was encouraged to fulfill the ministry he had received.

Aristarchus of Thessalonica: A Macedonian believer who accompanied Paul on his journeys and was with him during his imprisonment.

Aristobulus: A believer in Rome who is mentioned by Paul as being from the household of Narcissus.

Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermes, Patrobas, Hermas, and the brothers and sisters with them: Believers mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, who are greeted by him.

Barnabas: Barnabas was an early companion and mentor to Paul. He played a crucial role in Paul's acceptance among the apostles and assisted in spreading the Gospel.

Bernice: The sister of King Agrippa II and companion of her brother during Paul's defense before Festus, mentioned earlier.

Cornelius: Cornelius, a Roman centurion, is significant because his conversion represents the acceptance of Gentiles into the Christian faith.

Crescens: A companion of Paul mentioned briefly in 2 Timothy, believed to have been involved in his ministry.

Crispus: The ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who, along with his household, believed in the Lord and was baptized.

Damaris: A woman in Athens who also became a believer after Paul's preaching on the Areopagus.

Demas: A fellow worker and companion of Paul mentioned in his letters, who later abandoned him and embraced the world.

Demetrius the Silversmith: A silversmith in Ephesus who incited a riot against Paul

due to concerns about the impact on his business.

Dionysius the Areopagite: A member of the Areopagus in Athens who became a believer after hearing Paul's preaching.

Dorcus (also known as Tabitha): A faithful disciple known for her acts of charity and the miraculous restoration of her life by Peter.

Drusilla: The wife of Felix, the Roman governor, who heard Paul's preaching but was not persuaded to believe.

Elymas (Bar-Jesus): A Jewish sorcerer who opposed Paul and was temporarily struck blind by the power of God.

Epaphras: A fellow servant of Christ who was from Colossae and greatly labored for the believers in Colossae, Laodicea, and Hierapolis.

Epaphroditus: A fellow worker and messenger who was sent by the Philippians to minister to Paul while he was in prison.

Erastus: A city official in Corinth who is mentioned in passing by Paul in Romans 16

Erastus: A city treasurer in Corinth who is mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans.

Eunice and Lois: Timothy's mother and grandmother, who passed on their sincere faith to him.

Euodia and Syntyche: Two women in Philippi who were urged by Paul to reconcile their differences and be of the same mind in the Lord.

Euodia and Syntyche: Two women in the Philippian church who were urged to resolve their differences and be of the same mind in the Lord.

Eutychus: A young man who fell asleep during Paul's lengthy sermon in Troas, fell out of a window, and was miraculously revived.

Eutychus: A young man who fell asleep during Paul's lengthy sermon in Troas, fell out of a window, and was miraculously revived.

Felix: The Roman governor who listened to Paul's defense but kept him in custody for two years, hoping for a bribe.

Festus: The Roman governor who succeeded Felix and listened to Paul's defense before King Agrippa.

Fortunatus and Achaicus: Two believers from Corinth who brought encouragement to Paul during his ministry.

Gaius of Derbe: A man from Derbe who accompanied Paul during his journey and was attacked by a mob in Ephesus.

Gallio: A Roman proconsul in Corinth who dismissed the charges against Paul when brought before him.

Gamaliel: A respected Pharisee and teacher of the law who counseled caution in dealing with the early Christian movement.

Hermas: A believer mentioned in Paul's letter to the Romans, who is greeted by Paul along with others.

Hermogenes: A believer mentioned by Paul in his second letter to Timothy, who deserted him in Asia.

James (brother of Jesus): James, the brother of Jesus, becomes an influential leader in the early Christian community in Jerusalem.

James (brother of John): James, the brother of John and son of Zebedee, was one of the inner circle of disciples. He was the first of the apostles to be martyred.

Jason of Cyrene: A believer from Cyrene who accompanied Paul and his companions

to Jerusalem.

John Mark: Initially accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary journey but left early. Later, he was reconciled with Paul and became a valuable assistant.

Judas Barsabbas: Also known as Justus, he was one of the leading men among the believers in Jerusalem and was considered as a potential replacement for Judas Iscariot.

Julius: A centurion of the Augustan Cohort who was responsible for escorting Paul and other prisoners to Rome.

Junia: A female believer who was notable among the apostles and may have been imprisoned with Paul.

Justus: A Gentile believer mentioned in Acts who hosted Paul during his stay in Corinth.

Lucius of Cyrene: A prophet and teacher in the church at Antioch.

Lydia: Lydia, a wealthy businesswoman from Thyatira, becomes one of the first converts to Christianity in Philippi.

Magicians and sorcerers of Paphos: Elymas (Bar-Jesus), a Jewish false prophet, and Sergius Paulus, the Roman proconsul who sought to hear the Word of God.

Manaen: A close associate of Herod Antipas who was also a member of the early church in Antioch.

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Mary, the mother of Jesus: Though she is not mentioned extensively in Acts, Mary is present among the believers in the upper room during the outpouring of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Matthias: Chosen by the remaining apostles to replace Judas Iscariot as one of the Twelve.

Men of Berea: The Berean Jews who eagerly examined the Scriptures to verify the truth of Paul's teachings.

Mnason of Cyprus: A disciple from Cyprus who hosted Paul and his companions when they arrived in Jerusalem.

Mnason: A believer from Cyprus who welcomed Paul and his companions in Jerusalem.

Naaman: A man who was struck blind by Paul's words but regained his sight when Ananias prayed for him.

Narcissus: A prominent freedman and advisor to the Roman emperor Claudius, from whose household some believers came.

Niger: A believer in Antioch mentioned among the prophets and teachers in the church.

Nympha: A believer in Laodicea who hosted a church in her house.

Nymphas: A believer in Laodicea who hosted a church in his house.

Onesimus: A runaway slave from Philemon who encountered Paul and became a believer, leading to his reconciliation with Philemon.

Onesiphorus: A believer from Ephesus who showed great kindness and support to Paul, even during his imprisonment.

Parmenas: One of the seven chosen to oversee the distribution of food among the widows in the early Jerusalem church.

Paul (formerly known as Saul of Tarsus): Paul, one of the most prominent figures in Acts, undergoes a conversion from a persecutor of Christians to a missionary and apostle. His missionary journeys and teachings play a central role in the narrative.

Persis: A woman mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, who is commended for her hard work in the Lord.

Philemon: A believer in Colossae who owned the slave Onesimus and received a personal letter from Paul regarding Onesimus.

Philetus: A false teacher mentioned by Paul in 2 Timothy, who spread harmful doctrines.

Philip the Evangelist: One of the seven chosen to oversee the distribution of food in the early Jerusalem church and later known for his evangelistic ministry.

Philippian jailer: The jailer in Philippi who witnessed the earthquake and came to faith in Christ along with his household.

Philip's daughters: Four prophetesses mentioned in Acts 21

Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas: Bel

Phoebe: A deaconess from Cenchreae who was commended by Paul and entrusted with delivering his letter to the Romans.

Publius' father: The father of Publius, the chief official of Malta, who was healed by Paul from a fever and dysentery.

Publius: The chief official of Malta who showed kindness to Paul and his companions after their shipwreck.

Quartus: A believer mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, who is greeted along with others.

Rhoda: A servant girl in the house where the believers gathered, who was amazed when Peter showed up at the door after his release from prison.

Rufus' mother: A woman mentioned by Paul as being like a mother to him.

Rufus: A believer mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, whose mother also had been like a mother to Paul.

Sapphira: The wife of Ananias, who conspired with her husband to deceive the apostles but faced divine judgment.

Sceva: A Jewish chief priest who attempted to cast out evil spirits by invoking the name of Jesus, resulting in a violent encounter.

Secundus: A believer from Thessalonica who traveled with Paul and his companions.

Sergius Paulus: The Roman proconsul of Cyprus who believed in the teaching of Paul and was converted to Christianity.

Silas (Silvanus): A companion of Paul who joined him on his second missionary journey and later accompanied him to Jerusalem.

Simon the magician: A Samaritan sorcerer who claimed to be someone great but was rebuked by Peter for his sinful desire.

Simon the tanner: A tanner by trade who provided lodging to Peter in Joppa.

Sosthenes: The ruler of the synagogue in Corinth who was beaten by the crowd in the presence of Gallio, the proconsul.

Stephanas: A believer from Corinth who, along with his household, devoted themselves to the service of the saints.

Stephen: Stephen, a follower of Jesus, is recognized as the first Christian martyr. He is known for his bold preaching and being stoned to death for his faith.

Tertius: The scribe who wrote down Paul's letter to the Romans as Paul dictated it.

Tertullus: A skilled speaker and lawyer hired by the Jews to accuse Paul before Felix, the Roman governor.

The Bereans: A group of Jews in Berea who eagerly received the message preached by

Paul and Silas and examined the Scriptures daily.

The brethren in Rome: The believers in Rome who welcomed and supported Paul upon his arrival in the city.

The elders of Ephesus: The leaders of the Ephesian church whom Paul addressed in his farewell speech at Miletus.

The Ethiopian eunuch: An important official in the court of Queen Candace of Ethiopia, who was baptized by Philip.

The Jailer of Philippi: The jailer who, after an earthquake, witnessed the power of God and became a believer along with his household.

The Maltese people: The inhabitants of the island of Malta who showed kindness to Paul and his companions after the shipwreck.

The Philippian slave girl: A slave girl who had a spirit of divination and brought her owners much gain but was freed from the spirit by Paul.

The seven sons of Sceva: Jewish exorcists who tried to cast out demons by using the name of Jesus but were overpowered by the evil spirits.

The Seven: A group of Greek-speaking believers chosen to oversee the distribution of food among the widows in the early Jerusalem church.

The town clerk of Ephesus: A respected official who calmed the rioting crowd in Ephesus and defended the rights of Paul and his companions.

The Twelve Apostles: The original disciples of Jesus who became apostles play important roles in Acts. This includes Peter, John, James (son of Zebedee), Andrew, Philip, Thomas, Bartholomew, Matthew, James (son of Alphaeus), Simon the Zealot, Judas (son of James), and Matthias (who replaced Judas Iscariot).

Timothy: A young disciple who joined Paul during his second missionary journey and became a close companion and co-worker and later became a trusted coworker and pastor.

Titus: A trusted companion of Paul who played a significant role in the ministry and church planting efforts

Trophimus the Ephesian: A companion of Paul who was mistakenly thought to have been brought into the temple, causing controversy.

Tryphaena and Tryphosa: Two women mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, who are commended for their labor in the Lord.

Tychicus: A beloved brother and faithful servant who traveled with Paul and delivered his letters to various churches.

Urbanus: A fellow worker mentioned by Paul in his letter to the Romans, who is commended for his work in the Lord.