

# History of the Christian Church

## Course Introduction

- This course is a survey of church history that will put an emphasis on major events that have shaped Christianity as we know it today.
- There will be events that are important that we will not be able to cover.
- Course Outline
- As we examine the history of the Christian church we will see many good things that took place to further the kingdom of God.
- But unfortunately, there were also many dark times and events, where it was difficult to see the Holy Spirit at work.
- But all of the events of the past (both good and bad) have brought us to the present state of the “church”.
- But we must remember that regardless of how often man twisted the Scriptures, did evil in the name of the Lord, or used the church for their own agenda that the Spirit of God has persevered and could not be extinguished.
- Isaiah 40:8
  - “The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God remains forever”
- But if God’s Word remains forever and has never changed, then why has the “church” changed?
- Why are there so many different beliefs surrounding Christianity?
- While God’s Word has never changed something has...
  - Our interpretation of Scripture has changed
  - Our opinion has changed
  - Our culture has changed
  - Our perspective on the infallibility of Scripture has changed
  - Our perspective on the influence of tradition has changed
  - These factors have affected the “church” ever since it was established by Christ.
- Benefits of studying church history
  - It will provide clarity as to why the church is so divided today.
  - Ancient Christians went through very similar circumstances that affect the modern-day Christian.
  - Understanding the past gives clarity to the present and future.

## The Landscape of the Church Today

- Pew Research says that 70% of the American population identify themselves as Christians.
- However, when you break down this 70% you find that there are numerous groups who call themselves Christians that have very different beliefs on what being a “Christian” is.

### Christians Decline as Share of U.S. Population; Other Faiths and the Unaffiliated Are Growing

	2007 %	2014 %	Change* %
<b>Christian</b>	<b>78.4</b>	<b>70.6</b>	<b>-7.8</b>
Protestant	51.3	46.5	-4.8
Evangelical	26.3	25.4	-0.9
Mainline	18.1	14.7	-3.4
Historically black	6.9	6.5	-
Catholic	23.9	20.8	-3.1
Orthodox Christian	0.6	0.5	-
Mormon	1.7	1.6	-
Jehovah's Witness	0.7	0.8	-
Other Christian	0.3	0.4	-
<b>Non-Christian faiths</b>	<b>4.7</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>+1.2</b>
Jewish	1.7	1.9	-
Muslim	0.4	0.9	+0.5
Buddhist	0.7	0.7	-
Hindu	0.4	0.7	+0.3
Other world religions**	<0.3	0.3	-
Other faiths**	1.2	1.5	+0.3
<b>Unaffiliated</b>	<b>16.1</b>	<b>22.8</b>	<b>+6.7</b>
Atheist	1.6	3.1	+1.5
Agnostic	2.4	4.0	+1.6
Nothing in particular	12.1	15.8	+3.7
<b>Don't know/refused</b>	<b>0.8</b>	<b>0.6</b>	<b>-0.2</b>
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

### Christian

▶ <b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	25.4%
▶ <b>Mainline Protestant</b>	14.7%
▶ <b>Historically Black Protestant</b>	6.5%
<b>Catholic</b>	20.8%
▶ <b>Mormon</b>	1.6%
▶ <b>Orthodox Christian</b>	0.5%
<b>Jehovah's Witness</b>	0.8%
▶ <b>Other Christian</b>	0.4%

### Christian

▶ <b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	25.4%
▶ Baptist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	9.2%
▶ Methodist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Nondenominational Family (Evangelical Trad.)	4.9%
▶ Lutheran Family (Evangelical Trad.)	1.5%
▶ Presbyterian Family (Evangelical Trad.)	0.8%
▶ Pentecostal Family (Evangelical Trad.)	3.6%
▶ Episcopal/Anglican Family (Evangelical Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Restorationist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	1.6%
▶ Congregationalist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Holiness Family (Evangelical Trad.)	0.7%
▶ Reformed Family (Evangelical Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Adventist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	0.6%
▶ Anabaptist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	0.3%
▶ Pietist Family (Evangelical Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Other evangelical/fundamentalist family (Evangelical Trad.)	0.3%
▶ Nonspecific Protestant Family (Evangelical Trad.)	1.5%

### Christian

▶ <b>Evangelical Protestant</b>	25.4%
▶ <b>Mainline Protestant</b>	14.7%
▶ Baptist Family (Mainline Trad.)	2.1%
▶ Methodist Family (Mainline Trad.)	3.9%
▶ Nondenominational Family (Mainline Trad.)	1.0%
▶ Lutheran Family (Mainline Trad.)	2.1%
▶ Presbyterian Family (Mainline Trad.)	1.4%
▶ Episcopal/Anglican Family (Mainline Trad.)	1.2%
▶ Restorationist Family (Mainline Trad.)	0.3%
▶ Congregationalist Family (Mainline Trad.)	0.5%
▶ Reformed Family (Mainline Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Anabaptist Family (Mainline Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Friends Family (Mainline Trad.)	< 0.3%
▶ Nonspecific Protestant Family (Mainline Trad.)	1.9%

- Mainline Churches:
  - American Baptist Churches (USA)
  - Episcopal Church
  - Evangelical Lutheran in America – Uses “Evangelical” but are mainline.
  - Presbyterian Church (USA)
  - United Methodist Church
  - United Church of Christ
- Mainline Theology: - Note “common” views but may differ
  - Theologically and politically liberal
  - Neo-orthodoxy – The Bible is man’s interpretation of Jesus’s/God’s actions. It is not inspired by God and it is a human document that is prone to errors and may not be literally true.
  - Ecumenism – Promote worldwide unity among all religions. See it as OK to have a joint prayer or sermon with a Muslim imam or Hindu.
- Evangelical Churches:
  - New Site Baptist Church
  - Evangelical Presbyterian Church & various other branches
  - Evangelical Methodist Church & various other branches
  - Vast number of churches and denominations that have an evangelical orthodox perspective.
  - Waters tend to get “muddy” do your homework!
- Evangelical Theology:
  - Theologically conservative
  - Salvation is through a personal faith experience in Jesus Christ commonly referred to being “born-again”.
  - Orthodoxy – The Bible is the revealed Word of God and it is completely inspired. God through the Holy Spirit guided the human authors to write what He divinely willed. The Bible is inerrant, meaning there are no errors.
- What about on a global scale?
 

The United States has the highest percentage of the world’s Christian population.

**10 Countries with the Largest Number of Christians**

Country	ESTIMATED 2010 CHRISTIAN POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION THAT IS CHRISTIAN	PERCENTAGE OF WORLD CHRISTIAN POPULATION
United States	246,780,000	79.5%	11.3%
Brazil	175,770,000	90.2	8.0
Mexico	107,780,000	95.0	4.9
Russia	105,220,000	73.6	4.8
Philippines	86,790,000	93.1	4.0
Nigeria	80,510,000	50.8	3.7
China	67,070,000	5.0	3.1
DR Congo	63,150,000	95.7	2.9
Germany	58,240,000	70.8	2.7
Ethiopia	52,580,000	63.4	2.4
Subtotal for the 10 Countries	1,043,880,000	40.4	47.8
Total for Rest of World	1,140,180,000	6.3	52.2
<b>World Total</b>	<b>2,184,060,000</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Population estimates are rounded to the ten thousands. Percentages are calculated from unrounded numbers. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding. See Appendix C for details on the range of estimates available for China.

- Even though Christianity began in the Middle East-North Africa, today that region has the lowest concentration of Christians (3.8% of population) and the smallest number of Christians of any major geographic region.

**Christian Population by Region, 1910**

Region	ESTIMATED 1910 CHRISTIAN POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION THAT WAS CHRISTIAN	PERCENTAGE OF WORLD CHRISTIAN POPULATION
Americas	165,890,000	95.9%	27.1%
Europe	405,780,000	94.5	66.3
Sub-Saharan Africa	8,560,000	9.1	1.4
Asia Pacific	27,510,000	2.7	4.5
Middle East-North Africa	4,070,000	9.5	0.7
<b>World Total</b>	<b>611,810,000</b>	<b>34.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Source: Pew Forum analysis of 1914 data from the Census for the Study of Global Christianity. Population estimates are rounded to the nearest million. Percentages are calculated from rounded numbers. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life  
Global Christianity, December 2011

**Christian Population by Region, 2010**

Region	ESTIMATED 2010 CHRISTIAN POPULATION	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION THAT IS CHRISTIAN	PERCENTAGE OF WORLD CHRISTIAN POPULATION
Americas	804,070,000	86.0%	36.8%
Europe	565,560,000	76.2	25.9
Sub-Saharan Africa	516,470,000	62.7	23.6
Asia Pacific	285,120,000	7.0	13.1
Middle East-North Africa	12,840,000	3.8	0.6
<b>World Total</b>	<b>2,184,060,000</b>	<b>31.7</b>	<b>100.0</b>

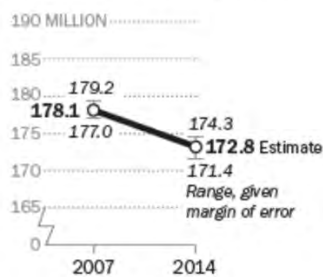
Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 100,000. Percentages are calculated from rounded numbers. Figures may not add exactly due to rounding.

Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion & Public Life  
Global Christianity, December 2011

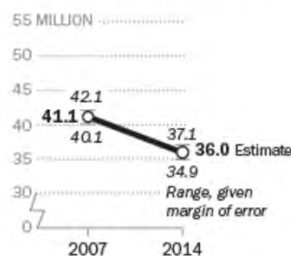


- What groups are declining?
  - Christian affiliation in general has been declining.
  - Total Christians declined by 7%
  - Mainline and Catholics took the biggest hit.

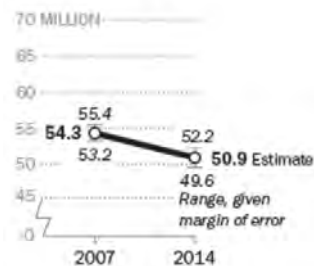
**Estimated Number of Christians Declines**



**Five Million Fewer Mainline Protestant Adults Than in 2007**

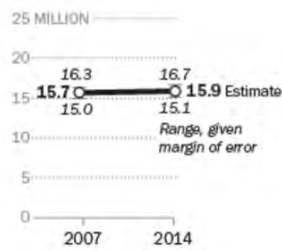


**Declining Number of Catholics**

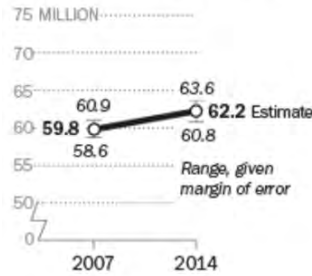


- What groups are growing?
  - The historically black protestant church has been stable.
  - The Evangelical Protestant group is growing.

### Size of Historically Black Protestant Tradition Has Been Stable

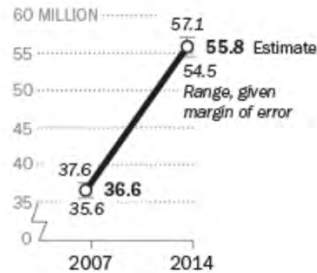


### Number of Evangelical Protestants Growing



- What group above all is making the most significant increases?
  - The unaffiliated adults (religious none's) have seen the most significant increases.

### Rapid Growth of Religiously Unaffiliated



- The lack of Christians among millennials is very concerning

Generational Replacement Helping Drive Growth of Unaffiliated, Decline of Mainline Protestantism and Catholicism

	Silent generation (born 1928-1945)	Baby Boomers (born 1946-1964)	Generation X (born 1965-1980)	Older Millennials (born 1981-1989)	Younger Millennials (born 1990-1996)
	%	%	%	%	%
<b>Christian</b>	<b>85</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56</b>
Protestant	57	52	45	38	36
Evangelical	30	28	26	22	19
Mainline	22	17	13	10	11
Historically black	5	7	7	6	6
Catholic	24	23	21	16	16
Other Christian groups	3	3	4	3	3
<b>Other faiths</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Unaffiliated</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>36</b>
Don't know/refused	1	1	1	1	1
	100	100	100	100	100

2014 Religious Landscape Study, conducted June 4-Sept. 30, 2014. Figures may not add to 100%, and nested figures may not add to subtotals indicated, due to rounding.  
The "other Christian groups" category includes Mormons, Orthodox Christians, Jehovah's Witnesses and a number of smaller Christian groups.  
PEW RESEARCH CENTER

## The Church According to Scripture

- There were no denominations in the Biblical church.
- The bible does not say anywhere what type of denomination the church was supposed to be.
- They were all Christians who were part of the same universal church.
- What is the meaning of the word "church"?
  - What do you say when someone says "Where is your church?"
    - Physical address? Church name?
    - The Greek word for church in the New Testament is "ekklisia" which means "those called out" or an "assembly"

- When applying this to Christians it is those who are true believers that gather together. It is the people!
- So “church” in the Bible is not a physical building but it is a group of true Christians.
- A gathering of believers who have come together for the purposes of God
- There are 2 groups of people or 2 distinctions that are considered a biblical “church”
  - Universal/Invisible Church
    - All Christians regardless of denomination are part of the universal church.
    - It is invisible because only God knows its boundaries.
      - 2 Timothy 2:19
        - “Nevertheless, God’s solid foundation stands firm, having this inscription: The Lord knows those who are His...”
    - A true Christian can be a member of the universal church but not necessarily be associated with a specific local congregation.
    - We are saved by God’s Grace through faith, NOT our church membership.
    - We must NEVER think that only our church or denomination are the only ones going to Heaven and that are true Christians.
    - ALL TRUE Christians are members of the same universal church (God’s household)
    - Ephesians 2:17-19
    - “When the Messiah came, He proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access by one Spirit to the Father. So, then you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with the saints, and members of God’s household”
- Local Church
  - This is what we commonly refer to when we say “church”. It is our local congregation.
  - A local church that is a “true church” is part of the universal church of Christ.
  - Local churches who are “true churches” can be made up of true Christians (those part of the universal church) and those that are not. (You can be a member of a true church but still be lost.)
  - The local church can be very small even a group of 3-6 people.
    - Philemon 1-3
      - “to Apphia our sister, to Archippus our fellow soldier, and to the church that meets in your home
    - Colossians 4:15
      - “Give my greetings to the brothers in Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her home.”
  - The local church or congregation is Biblical and God desires for all Christians to have fellowship with one another.
  - This is how God intended His glory and truth to be proclaimed to the world.
    - Ephesians 3:10-11
      - “This is so God’s multifaceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. This



is according to His eternal purpose accomplished in the Messiah, Jesus our Lord.”

- When the church was obedient and they had fellowship, God grew the church and many came to know Christ.
- Acts 3:41-47
- The First public sermon
  - Peter gave the first public sermon to the lost.
    - Acts 2:22-24
    - Acts 2:32-40
  - What were the main points Peter preached about?
    - Jesus is Lord (God) and the Messiah who was crucified and resurrected.
    - Jesus now sits at the right hand of the father in Heaven.
    - Repentance, forgiveness of sins
    - Receiving of the Holy Spirit
    - Baptism by obedience (not required for Salvation)
    - Salvation is available for ALL who believe (Acts 2:21)
  - These truths are critical and foundational to our Christian beliefs.
- Actions of the first Christian congregation
  - Acts 2:41-47
  - Preach/teach the Gospel in its entirety
  - Baptize and acknowledge believers in Christ.
  - Make Christians into disciples and repeat.

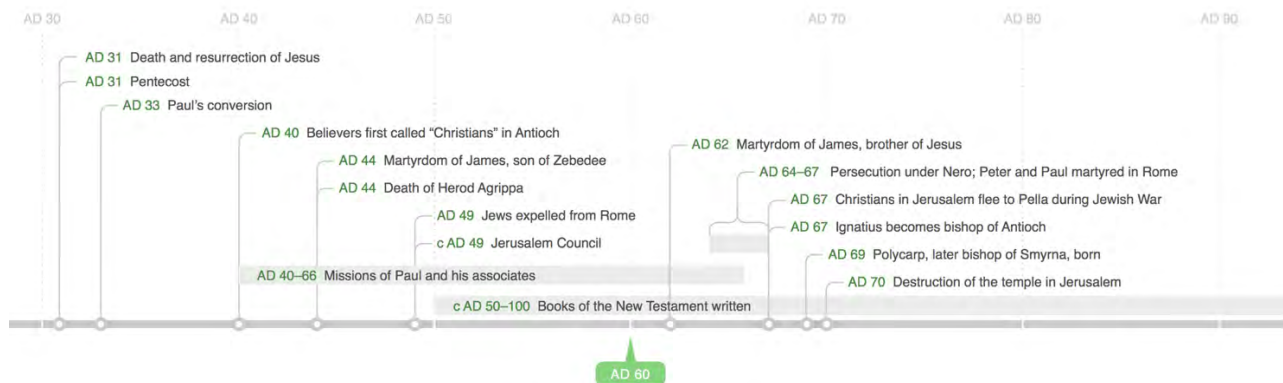
## **Christianity and Judaism**

- Even though the Jews were God’s chosen people that we read about in Scripture. Those who follow Judaism today are not Christians.
- Christianity Perspective
  - A Christian takes into account the events of the Old and New Testament of Scripture as God’s divine truth.
  - Christians believe that the Old Testament was a foreshadow for the coming Messiah, which was fulfilled through Jesus Christ.
  - That God established the priests, sacrifices and the temple for His divine purpose however these were temporary.
  - Christians recognize the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and the New Testament as God’ inspired Word that shows us who God is and the redeeming work of Jesus on the cross.
- Judaism Perspective
  - The unbelieving Jews (both in Biblical and modern times) do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.
  - They do not believe that he was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament.
  - They have mixed views – Jesus was either a good teacher at best or worse, a false prophet.

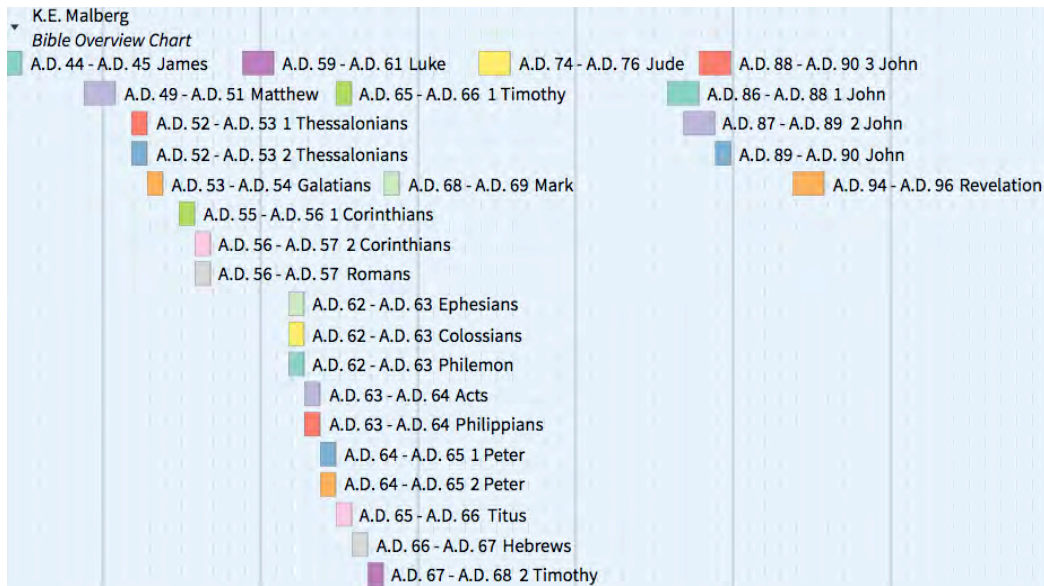
- In fact, the unbelieving Jews in the biblical times thought the Jews who believed in Jesus were a heretical sect within Judaism.
- The Jews followed the law as it has been given in the Old Testament primarily the Torah or Pentateuch which is the first five books of the Old Testament.
- The rest of the Old Testament was also Scripture to them, and it was known as the Hebrew Bible.
- They also recognize the “Mishna/Talmud” which is their oral law or tradition.
- This was oral because it was never written down (until 200 A.D.). It was additional instruction on how to live a Jewish life and interpret the written law (Torah/Scripture)
- Jesus’s perspective on their tradition - Mark chapter 7
- There were Jews who believed in Jesus Christ who then became Christians or Jewish-Christians.
- But there were many who did not and still do not even today. The lies instilled by Satan and the Jewish leaders of the day directly influenced their unbelief.
- Matthew 28:11-15

## Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century

### ➤ Timeline Overview







## Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century – Jewish Christians and the Gentiles

- The first Christians were Jewish Christians (also called Hebrew Christians or Judeo-Christians).
- These Jewish Christians did not see Christianity as a new religion but as a continuation or completion of Judaism.
- Therefore, they did not abandon their Jewish practices or traditions.
- These Jewish Christians even welcomed the Gentiles into the faith. They knew that the prophets spoke of all nations would be brought together when the Messiah came.
- The Holy Spirit showed Peter the truth that the Gospel was for EVERYONE not just the Jews.
  - Acts 10:34-35, 43-48
- There was disagreement among the Jews initially concerning the Gentiles. The Pharisees thought it necessary for the Gentiles to become Jews. But Peter declared that we are saved by Grace through faith and justified by God.
  - Acts 15:5-11
- While the first Christians and members of the universal church were Jewish, they were soon overwhelmed by the Gentiles.
- The Jews were having a harder time accepting the truth of Christ, but the Gentiles were being converted in masses.
- By A.D. 64 the Christians of that day had separated themselves from the traditional Jewish practices of circumcision, dietary laws and viewing the Sabbath on Saturday (switching to Sunday the day of the resurrection).
  - The first time this transition to Sunday is recorded for us in the Bible is in the Book of Acts. This event took place in approximately A.D. 56.
  - Acts 20:7
    - “On the first day of the week, when we were gathered together to break bread,…”

- There was now a hard line in the church between the Jewish synagogue and the Christian Church.
- Both groups sought distinction between one another.
- The resentment between the Christians and Jews was so extensive that the Jewish leaders added a prayer that stated how they are thankful that they are not like the Nazarenes!
- To this day there is still this conflict between Judaism and Christianity.

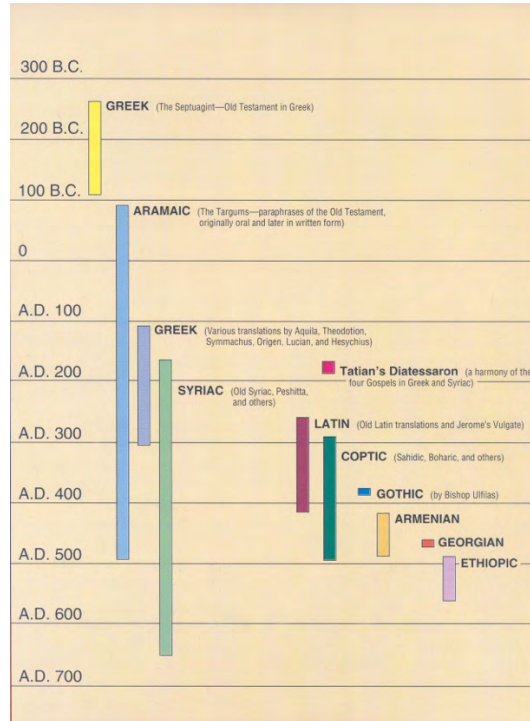
## **Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century – Greco-Roman World**

- Living in the 1st century A.D for the Christian was to live in the Greco-Roman World
- This is a world that is significantly influenced by Greek culture but being under Roman rule.
  - The major Greek influence (Hellenization) originated by the work of Alexander the Great. (356-323 B.C.) after his conquest of the Persian empire among others.
  - The Greek culture began its influence on the Jews however during the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities (721 and 597 B.C.). This was known as the Dispersion and Scripture refers to these Jews as Hellenists.



- God used the Dispersion to spread the Gospel throughout the Roman Empire.
- When we look at what the Israelites did to become exiled, it was their sin and disobedience to God. But even in exile God used this to further His kingdom.
- God used this as an opportunity to put the Scriptures in the Greek language (Septuagint).
- Since the Jew were dispersed throughout the land, they became integrated into Greek culture. They soon forgot their native Hebrew language and instead spoke, read Greek and Aramaic.
- Greek was a very common language that everyone could read. So, while they may have spoken Aramaic the best language to write something down in and have it understood by all would be Greek.

- So, it didn't take long for them to translate the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) into the Greek language. This translation became known as the Septuagint.
- The Septuagint was translated by 70 Jewish scholars in Alexandria of Egypt in 200 B.C. It is also known as the LXX attributing the Jewish scholars.
- Ancient Versions of Biblical Text



- Having the Old Testament now in the common Greek language made it easy for anyone to read and understand the Scriptures.
- In fact, when the OT is quoted by New Testament authors it is from the Greek LXX and not the Hebrew.
- The Septuagint also included the Apocrypha, which are additional books that are not recognized by the Hebrew Bible. More on this later 😊
- Influence of pagan philosophy
  - Another challenge for the Jew and Christians of the times was the influence of pagan philosophy.
  - Ancient Greek philosophy had been around since the 6<sup>th</sup> century BCE. It was central to understanding life for many in the Greek culture.
    - Subjects: political philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, ontology, logic, biology, rhetoric, and aesthetics.
    - Famous philosophers: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle.
  - We see that Paul had to deal with these philosophers on several occasions in the Book of Acts.
    - Acts 17:18-21

- Christianity certainly had to in a sense “compete” with these philosophers and to show them how the Scriptures are truly the basis for all knowledge and understanding.
- Though not only did they have to “compete” they also began to embrace it and use it as a way to give credibility to Christianity.
  - The popular philosophers of the day for example like Plato and Socrates had criticized the many gods that the people were worshiping.
  - They also affirmed that there was a higher being of authority and truth and that the soul was immortal.
  - Since these philosophers were so popular the Christians would use these types of similarities to give credibility for Christianity.
- Though some took this too far as was the case with Philo of Alexandria.
  - Philo sought to prove to the philosophers that the Hebrew scriptures agreed with pagan philosophy.
  - That since the Hebrew Scriptures came first that the philosophers drew from them.
  - However, where he went “to far” was when he sought to prove that the God of the Hebrew Scriptures was the same as the One of the philosophers. That if you took the Scriptures to be speaking figuratively and understood by allegorical interpretation it would make since.
  - This of course is to take away the literal and plain meaning of the Scriptures and to turn them into something they are not.

### **Persecution by the Roman Government**

- Prior to the Roman government, Christians were persecuted by the Jews.
- The persecution of the Christians by the Roman government began from the time of Nero in A.D. 54 and lasted until the conversion of Constantine who was the first Christian Roman emperor (4<sup>th</sup> century).
- This persecution began when the Romans began to see Christianity as a separate religion from Judaism.
- The line separating the two was becoming very visible. You were either Christian or Jewish.
- The Romans had been giving the Jews numerous exceptions to their laws to accommodate them. With their previous run-ins with the they found it easier to let the Jews do their own thing.
- The Romans decided they were NOT going to have another group with “exceptions”.
- The Roman government sought to have peace among its empire especially when it came to religion.
- They found that (especially with the Jews) if you interfere with people’s beliefs there can be uprisings.
- To instill order, the Roman government introduced two concepts called syncretism and emperor worship.
  - Syncretism

- Incorporated the various aspects of the religions into one.
- *“All gods are really the same people just give them different names.”*
- The Roman empire was polytheistic (worshipped multiple gods)
- Zeus Hermes etc. | Acts 15:11-13
- But the Christians proved to be stubborn and didn't like this concept.
- They insisted on their monotheistic view of their only being 1 God
- Emperor Worship
  - The Roman empire was OK with you worshipping your “god” so long as you showed a sign of your loyalty to the emperor.
  - This later took place in the form of burning incense before the emperor’s image and saying, “Caesar is lord”.
  - A certificate was presented showing that you had performed this task.
  - Disobedience was treason or show disrespect. Either of which brought punishment.
  - Except for the Jews, they were given an exemption.
    - Roman emperor Claudius (41-54 A.D.) provided this exemption.

### **Persecution by occupation**

- Christians who were teachers, masons and tailors found persecution for their beliefs.
- The teacher had to teach about false god’s, the mason had to build idols and the tailor was asked to make robes for pagan worship.

### **Persecution under emperor Nero**

- Nero was the emperor of Rome from 54-68 A.D.
- On June 18<sup>th</sup> 64 A.D. a great fire broke out in Rome which destroyed 80% of the city.
- Historians differ on the actual cause of the fire. It was either accidental or perhaps intentional by Nero himself.
  - Nero was seen as a being a bit “mad” and that he wanted to rebuild Rome to his liking, so he had it destroyed.
- However, what we do know is that Nero being under intense scrutiny for possibly being the instigator of the fire proceeded to blame the Christians.
  - Apparently many Christian and Jewish residences survived the fire, so it made them easy targets.
- With blame being put upon the Christians this opened the floodgate for severe persecution.
- Notes from Roman historian Tacitus (A.D. 56-117)
  - In spite of every human effort, of the emperor’s largesse, and of the sacrifices made to the gods, nothing sufficed to allay suspicion nor to destroy the opinion that the fire had been ordered. Therefore, in order to destroy this rumor, Nero blamed the Christians, who are hated for their abominations, and punished them

with refined cruelty. Christ, from whom they take their name, was executed by Pontius Pilate during the reign of Tiberius...

- Stopped for a moment, this evil superstition reappeared, not only in Judea, where was the root of the evil, but also in Rome, where all things sordid and abominable from every corner of the world come together. Thus, first those who confessed [that they were Christians] were arrested, and on the basis of their testimony a great number was condemned, although not so much for the fire itself as for their hatred of humankind.
- The persecution began because of false blame, but this was not the real reason why the persecution was so severe.
- It was because of their perception that Christians hated humankind.
- This seems quite odd since we know the opposite is true. Christians show great love for one another
- So where was the breakdown? Why were the Christians seen this way?
- This was because Christians withdrew themselves from society and did not participate in social activities.
- Theater, army, literature and sports.
- The Christians withdrew because all of these activities intertwined with pagan worship.
- The Christians could only worship and serve the one true God. So, because of this decision in the eyes of the Romans the Christians hated humankind.
- In fact, they Christians were even called atheists because they worshiped an invisible God.
- Tacitus also recorded:
  - Before killing the Christians, Nero used them to amuse the people. Some were dressed in furs, to be killed by dogs. Others were crucified. Still others were set on fire early in the night, so that they might illumine it. Nero opened his own gardens for these shows, and in the circus he himself became a spectacle, for he mingled with the people dressed as a charioteer, or he rode around in his chariot...
  - All of this aroused the mercy of the people, even against these culprits who deserved an exemplary punishment, for it was clear that they were not being destroyed for the common good, but rather to satisfy the cruelty of one person.
- There is also much agreement among historians and tradition that Peter and Paul were both martyred because of the Nero persecution.
- Paul being a Roman citizen was beheaded.
- Peter was crucified upside down because he did not deem himself worthy to be crucified in the same way as Christ.

### **Persecution under Domitian**

- Domitian ruled shortly after Nero from 81-96 A.D.
- He proclaimed himself divine and forced his subjects to call him “Lord God”

- He revived the persecution against the Christians and even had members of his own family killed (Flavius and Domitilla Clemens)
- However, it is this very persecution that is believed to have sent John to the island of Patmos to write the book of Revelation.

### **The Pliny and Trajan Letters – A.D. 110**

- These are a series of letters regarding Christians between Pliny the Younger (governor of Bithynia) and emperor Trajan.
- Their purpose was to discuss his “Christian problem” and how to deal with them.
- It was law at this time that to be a Christian was illegal.
- The Christian population was growing so much that the pagan temples were almost deserted and there were few buyers for the animals used for sacrifice.
- This was a problem and so he began to do something about it.
- He obtained a list of all Christians and began pulling them all in for questioning.
- If they admitted to being a Christian, he gave them an opportunity to recant or be put to death.
- They could pray to the Roman gods, burn incense before an image of the emperor and curse Christ.
- If they did these things he would let them go.
- He soon found that there were many Christians and of all different ages. He being a “just” man sought to know more about them.
- The rumors about Christians at the time was that they were cannibals, participated in orgies and incest.
  - “Eat of my body and drink of my blood, greet each other with a holy kiss, calling each other brothers and sisters”
- However what Pliny found was that the Christians did the following:
  - Gathered together before daylight to sing a song to Christ as God.
  - They bound themselves with an oath to not commit a crime – theft, robbery, adultery.
  - They would separate and partake of a meal, common yet harmless (which is not the characteristic of a nefarious superstition)
- But even after finding out the Christian seemed harmless it was still illegal
- He received guidance from Emperor Trajan to not seek them out, but if they were brought before him and accused then give them the opportunity to recant. If they do not, they proceed with executing them.



## Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century – Expansion of the Church and Christianity

- Jerusalem was the epicenter for the spreading of Christianity.
  - After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the apostles stayed in Jerusalem just as Jesus had commanded them.
    - This was approximately 5 years.
  - We may wonder why that was? Why did Jesus keep them there for so long?
  - Jerusalem was the hub where Jews from all providences came together.
  - It was an excellent place to be able to stay stationary and yet reach a wide audience. It proved to be very effective.
- The first outreach for Christian evangelism began because of persecution.
  - After the death of Stephen (AD 36) severe persecution broke out against the Christians. This gave them urgency to leave Jerusalem (not the apostles) and to bring their new-found faith to other places.
  - Tertullian – Christian scholar/theologian 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries.
    - *“The blood of Christians is the seed of the church”*
  - God used the persecutions of Saul to spread the Christians throughout the land.
    - Acts 8:1
      - “Saul agreed with putting him to death. On that day severe persecution broke out against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the land of Judea and Samaria.”
    - Acts 8:4
      - “So those who were scattered went on their way preaching the message of good news.”
    - Acts 11:19
      - “Those who had been scattered as a result of the persecution that started because of Stephen made their way as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, speaking the message to no one except the Jews.”



- The Church in Antioch
  - After the Christians were dispersed from Jerusalem, a group of unnamed “men of Cyprus and Cyrene” founded a successful church in Antioch.



○ Paul's 3rd Missionary Journey - Acts 18:23-21:17



○ Paul's Journey to Rome - Acts 27:1-28:31



○ Throughout his journeys Paul wrote his letters which was actually God's divinely inspired Scripture.



- Paul finished his life in Rome
  - The last Word of Scripture about Paul was that he was able to minister for 2 years unhindered as a prisoner under house arrest.
    - Acts 28:30-31



- While it is likely that he was martyred by Nero after these two years, God had used Him to proclaim the Gospel and to write God's inspired Word for the world to read.

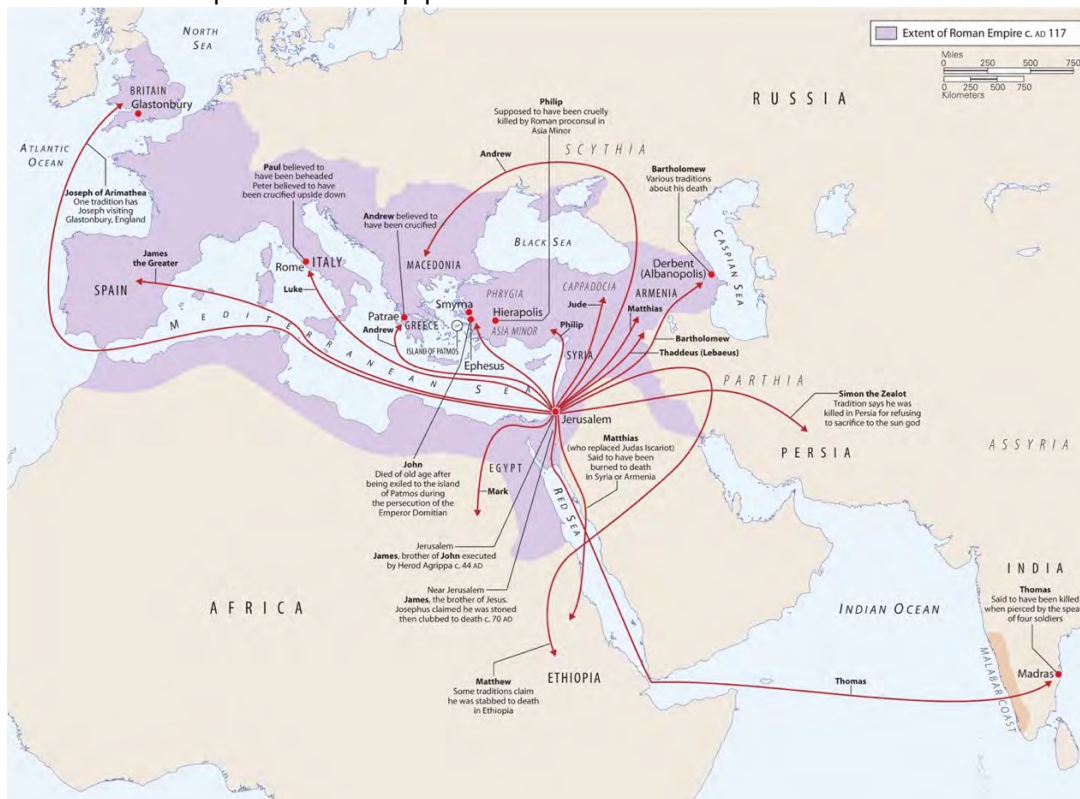
➤ The seven Churches of Revelation

- The last book of the Bible was written by John during his exile to the island of Patmos A.D. 94-96.



➤ Tradition and the Apostles

- Tradition isn't the most reliable source, but this is what is recorded regarding where the apostles ended up prior to their deaths.



- There are also numerous stories that are difficult to verify about these Apostles and their impact to the area's in which they proclaimed the Gospel.
  - James the Greater (Saint James and also Santiago) is seen as the founding apostle for the church in Spain.
    - That in A.D 40 he traveled there to proclaim the Gospel but wasn't having that much of an impact.
    - Then it is told that the Virgin Mary (whom was still alive) appeared to the Apostle James (river Ebro near Saragossa) on a Jasper pillar to encourage him and told him to build a church (in her honor) on that site around the Jasper pillar.
    - When Mary disappeared, the pillar remained, and tradition holds that a church was built and dedicated to Mary.
    - To this day this is known and celebrated as "Virgen del Pilar" or "Our Lady of the Pillar" to remember and venerate Mary.
    - The Roman Catholic church has rebuilt the original church on multiple occasions and today they claim that that the pillar of Jasper is the one in which was given to them by Mary.
    - On top of the pillar of Jasper they have placed a 15" statue of the Virgin Mary holding Christ and it is seen as a exceedingly important relic.
    - Also, the Apostle James is known as Saint James which in Spanish is "Santiago".
  - Thomas is believed to have been the one who started the church in India.
    - Though it includes a tale that while in India a king named Gondophares was looking for an architect. Thomas volunteered even though he wasn't one.
    - The king found out that Thomas was giving portions of the building funds to the poor, so he had him thrown in prison.
    - But while there the kings brother Gad died but subsequently came back from the dead. He told a story of seeing a heavenly place that was being built upon the money that Thomas had given to the poor.
    - On the spot this led to the conversion of the king to Christianity and Thomas was released and lived on until dying as a martyr.

## Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century – The Destruction of the temple in Jerusalem

- The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed in A.D. 70 when the Roman general Titus (later emperor) led his armies to destroy it after a major revolt from the Jews.
- It began when Gessius Florus (the procurator of Judah) began seizing silver from the temple. Florus was responsible for the financial affairs of Roman government in the Judah area.
- Florus was not well liked by the Jews because of this and he really didn't like them either.
- He began seizing the silver when the tax revenue was low.
- As this went on the Jews repeatedly refused his demands which infuriated Florus
- So out of retaliation Florus sent troops into Jerusalem and massacred over 3600 citizens.
- This triggered a massive revolt from the Jews against the Romans. The Jews then began expelling and killing the Romans from the cities.
- Cestius Callus (Roman governor for the region) sent 20,000 soldiers to besiege Jerusalem. But after 6 months he failed.
- Then Emperor Nero sent in Vespasian (general) to take care of the opposition in the surround areas like Galilee which were easier to overpower.
- Vespasian had great success and defeated all opposition except for Jerusalem.
- During this time however, Nero died and Vespasian was appointed to be the new Emperor.
- Vespasian's first action as emperor was to appoint his son to lead the ongoing war against the Jews.
- The work of Vespasian put Jerusalem in isolation.
- Their defenses held for a time, but they soon began to break down due to lack of resources and starvation.
- The Jews would fight all day and attempt to repair the walls at night.
- In time the 3 walls fell one by one until they city had been conquered.
- The Roman soldiers were so angry with the Jews that they burned the temple to the ground against the generals wishes.
- The destruction of the temple was foretold by Jesus
  - Matthew 24:1-2, Mark 13:1-2, Luke 21:7-36
- Aftermath of the temple's destruction
  - The Christians did not participate in the war and this helped solidify the line between Jews and Christians.
  - This was the end of the Jewish state until modern times in 1948



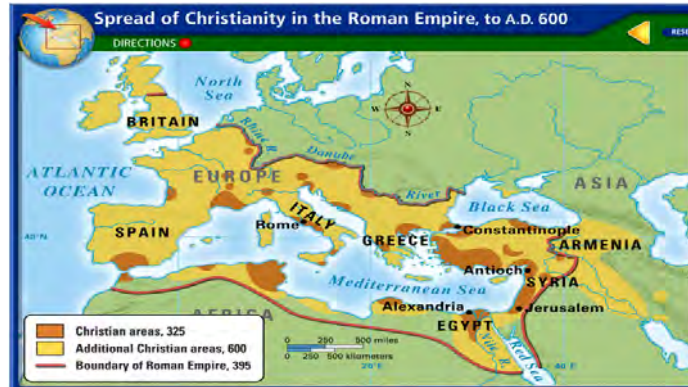
## Christianity in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century – The End of the Apostolic Age

- With the destruction of the temple in A.D. 70 this has become to be known as the end of the Apostolic Age.
- Most of the apostles are dead and the church's they had planted have passed the leadership onto a new generation.
- While it is the end of the time of the apostles, it is only the beginning for the great movement of Christianity!

## Ante-Nicene Period – A.D. 70-312

- This is the time period after the death of the apostles but before the council of Nicene that took place in A.D. 325.
- It was a very pivotal time for the church. The apostles and those who had direct contact with Jesus had passed away. It was now up to the next generation to carry on the great commission.
- This period of time is also known as “The Age of Catholic Christianity”
- However, “Catholic” does not refer to Catholicism but instead it means “universal”
  - Catholic/Universal: Designates a person who belongs to the universal Christian church.
  - When the Christians first used the word “catholic” it did not have the same meaning that it has today with Roman Catholicism.
- The term “catholic” was first used by Ignatius who was the bishop of Antioch in the early 2<sup>nd</sup> century.
  - Ignatius – *“Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the catholic church”*
- By the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century “catholic” was widely used to refer to the “universal church” which consists of all true believers regardless of their local congregation.
- These early Christians still viewed themselves as part of the same body of Christ, they were simply extensions of the original teachings of Jesus and His apostles.
- Christianity at this time had great unity and they were one unit. There were no denominations or sects of various beliefs.
- The Christians during this time period were being obedient to Christ and were obeying His commands. They were spreading the Gospel regardless of persecutions and they were showing true biblical Christian love to one another.
- Tertullian (2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> century Presbyter, Author) Was once a pagan but converted to Christianity. It wasn't by apologetics or fierce preaching, but because of the love that the Christians demonstrated in their walk.
- They were showing the world the identifying “mark of the Christian”
  - John 13:35
    - “By this all people will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”
- The results of the Christians obedience brought great growth to the universal church of God.
- The Spread of Christianity Geographically
  - Early Christian missionary work followed a similar path to that of the apostle Paul by spreading west of Antioch (Syria) to Italy and Spain.
  - It then moved to Asia Minor (Turkey), France, Britain, Egypt and other parts of North Africa.
  - Christianity had spread throughout all of these countries in less than 300 years.





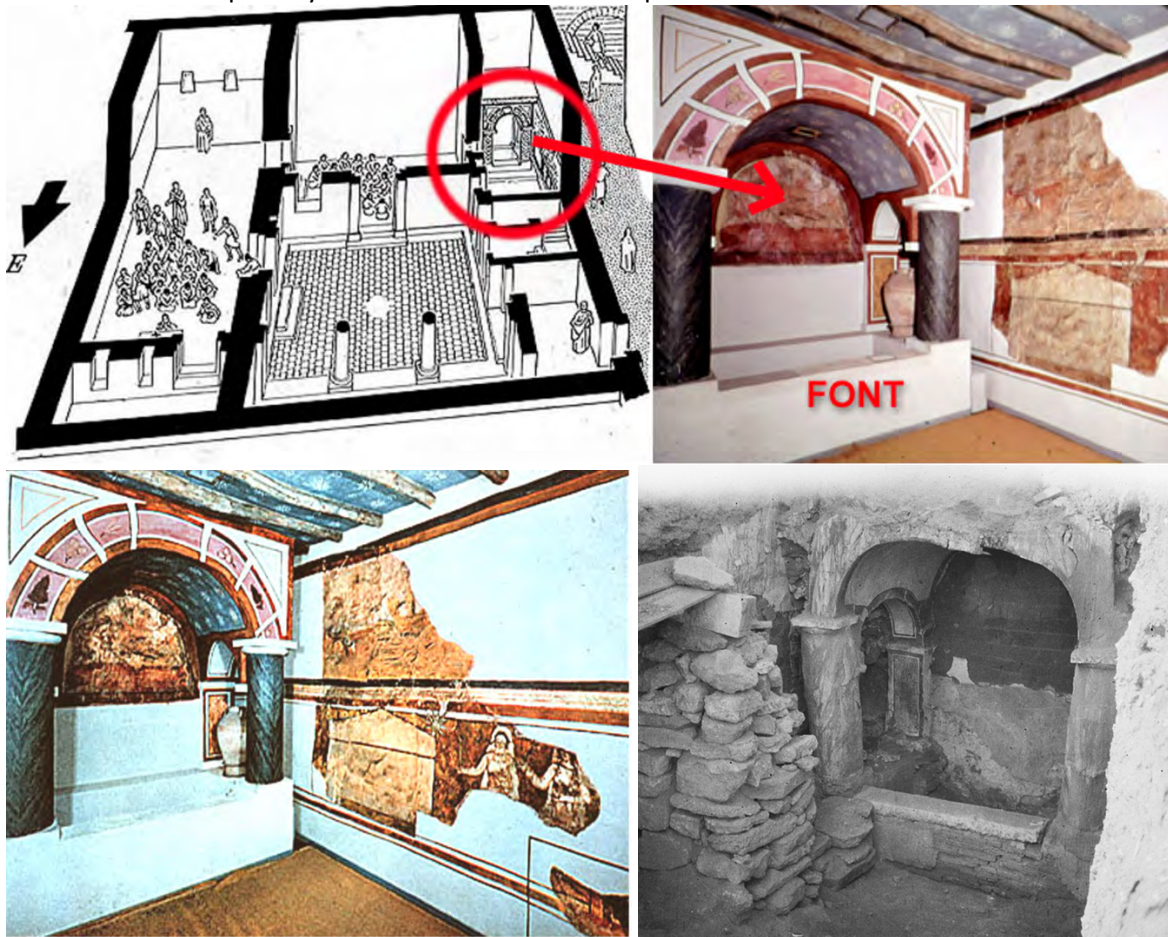
### **Ante-Nicene Period – A.D. 70-312 – Early Christian Worship**

- These early Christians would meet on the first day of the week (Sunday) to break bread and celebrate the resurrection of Christ.
- Communion was very common and took place frequently as to them it was a great act of Worship to God.
- In the beginning a full meal was part of the worship service where communion was taken at the end, but by the 3rd century the full meal was set aside
  - This was likely because of large numbers but also to quell the rumors about the Christians and their "love feasts". These Christians who came together and loved one another and ate together were thought to be doing something of a "sexual" nature.
  - The "great one another with a Holy Kiss" and Christians addressing one another as brother and sister was also misunderstood by external observers.
- One of the better recordings we have of early worship came from Justin Martyr a 2nd century apologist.

The day that is commonly called Sunday all those [believers] who live in the cities or the field gather, and in their meetings as much as time allows is read from the memoirs of the apostles or from the writings of the prophets. Then, once the reader is through, the one residing offers a verbal exhortation, urging us to follow these beautiful examples. Immediately after this, we all stand as one and raise our prayers, after which—as I have already said—bread, wine, and water are offered, and the president, as he is able also sends to God his prayer and thanks giving, and all the people respond, "Amen." Now follows the distribution and partaking of the nourishment that has been consecrated by thanksgiving, and they are sent by means of the deacons to those who are not present. Those who can and will, freely give what seems best to them, and the offering is given to the president. With this he helps orphans and widows, those who are in need because of illness or any other reasons, those who are in prison, sojourners, and, in short, the president provides for any who are in need. We hold this general gathering on Sunday, because it is the first day, in which God, transforming darkness and matter, created the world, and also the day in which Jesus Christ, our Savior, rose from the dead.

- From his letter and other various early Christian writings, we can summarize an average Christian worship "service"
  - Service began with reading from Scripture (memoirs of the apostles being the letters and Gospels) with commentaries to give assistance with explaining the meaning.
  - Prayers and singing from hymns.
  - This first part of the service lasted for several hours because having a copy of Scripture was quite rare, so this was the only opportunity Christians had to hear the Word.

- Then they would dismiss those who were not baptized to have communion.
  - Without baptism one could not receive communion.
  - Communion would begin with the kiss of peace and then bread and wine were brought forth with prayer.
  - Then an offering would be collected to give to the needy.
- It was also common for them to gather at the catacombs.
  - The Christians very early on owned burial grounds (catacombs) to bury their dead and also the dead of others who could not afford a proper burial.
  - They would also meet there to remember the martyrs on the anniversary of their deaths to have communion.
  - It is these meetings of communion at the catacombs that started really disturbing rumors about the Christians.
    - The Christians were underground around dead bodies and reading Scripture about eating of the body and drinking of the blood.
    - This was of course what Jesus asked of us to do in communion, but to a pagan eavesdropper they sounded like cannibals!
- More frequently than the catacombs the Christians met in homes and some that were designated solely for worship.
  - Baptistry of the church at Dura-Europos built before A.D. 256





### ➤ Baptism

- New Christian believers were not baptized right away.
- The Christians wanted to be sure that the new believers truly understood their commitment and beliefs before being baptized.
- So they had a time of instruction called "catechumenate", which by the 3rd century lasted up to three years.
- During this time of training they were taught the doctrine of Scripture so that when the time came for their baptism they would truly understand what it meant to be a Christian.
- Baptisms were held primarily once a year on the day of Christ's resurrection.
- There were 2 modes of baptism that were done, the one most preferred was immersion in running water. If running was not available then immersion in a standing pool. Then lastly if water was not readily available the one being baptized could kneel down and be poured 3 times.
  - Granted this differs depending on who you ask...there is GREAT disagreement on the "proper" mode of baptism today.
- This was all done in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- Baptismal Creed
  - Do you believe in God, the Father almighty?
  - Do you believe in Christ Jesus, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Ghost and of Mary the Virgin who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose again at the third day, living from among the dead, and ascended into heaven and sat at the right of the Father, and will come to judge the quick and the dead?
  - Do you believe in the Holy Ghost, the Holy Church, and the resurrection of the flesh?

## Ante-Nicene Period – A.D. 70-312 – Establishment of Basic Doctrine

- In the early church it became necessary to establish core doctrinal beliefs. They needed to formalize what they believed about Christ.
- At this time, it was generally understood what one was to believe, was based on the teachings of Jesus and the apostles.
- However, there were many false teachers who were spreading lies about the truth and were causing division among the Christians. So, it became necessary to establish what they believed.
- The need to have established doctrinal beliefs was necessary because if they weren't established it was difficult to point out those who were twisting the truth.
- The importance of knowing "what you believe and why" was critical for the early church just as it is for the modern-day Christian.
- False Teachers
  - The early false teachers and beliefs that attempted to stifle the church.
  - Gnosticism
    - This was the biggest heresy that threatened the early church.
    - The founding lies of the Gnostics are still held in some of the modern day false religions.
    - They believed that they were given "secret" teachings from Jesus that was not given to the Jews.
    - They believed in dualism meaning the world is divided into 2 cosmic forces (good and evil).
    - The God of the Old Testament is evil and created this likewise evil material world.
    - Our good spirits have been trapped in this evil world and our souls need knowledge to escape.
      - Lots of similarities with Mormonism
    - There are many god's and over time they produced a god who created the world which was an evil act.
    - Jesus was a lesser deity and was not God Almighty and they deny his humanity.
    - They reject His Jewish beginnings, the Torah, that He is the "Son of God, He did not perform miracles and was not resurrected.
    - Gnosticism is referenced in Scripture
    - 1 Timothy 6:20-21 (ESV)
      - "O Timothy, guard the deposit entrusted to you. Avoid the irreverent babble and contradictions of what is falsely called "knowledge," for by professing it some have swerved from the faith. Grace be with you."
    - Gnosticism led to the false (lost) Gospels
      - Gnostics created their own versions of Christian literary works that would support their beliefs.
      - This is what the Jehovah Witness's do today with their translation of the Bible. (No Hell)
      - This included – Book of Thomas, Gospel of James and the Secret Book of John.
      - These gnostic writing sought to give an alternative version of Christianity and Jesus.
      - Jesus had relations with Mary Magdalene and they kissed.

- Jesus had children and women have to become men to enter into Heaven.
  - Other heretical beliefs
    - Montanism – Belief in continuing revelation that God still calls prophets and priests in the modern day and reveals His divine revelation just as He did with the apostles. - Mormonism
    - Docetism – Jesus’s humanity was merely an illusion and He was not “born of the virgin” because he was never really human.
    - Arianism
      - Named after Arius (3<sup>rd</sup> century) an elder of Alexandria
      - Denied the full deity of Jesus.
      - That Jesus was a created being, a secondary God. - (Jehovah’s Witnesses and Mormon’s)
  - Marcion – 2<sup>nd</sup> century heretic
    - Marcion (2<sup>nd</sup> century) perhaps posed an even greater threat to the church than the Gnostics.
    - His views were similar, but he took it a step farther in that he actually established churches and his own “scripture”, that lasted for several centuries.
    - Beliefs:
      - The world is evil and therefore so is its creator (or he is ignorant).
      - Yahweh made the world and is the God of the Old Testament. However, Yahweh has no relationship with Jesus, and He is subordinate to a “supreme father”.
      - Yahweh out of ignorance or evil intent, made the world and put humankind in it.
      - The supreme father of the Christians is far above Yahweh and is a God of love, not judgment.
      - The supreme father loves all and gives salvation to everyone, there is no judgment in the end.
      - Jesus wasn’t actually born but He just appeared to have been.
    - His false teachings captivated people for centuries leading them astray.
  - Counterfeit Christianity?
    - Because of the discovery of the gnostic gospels there are those who sought to proclaim that the modern-day version of Christianity was really false and that the Gnostic versions were the truth.
    - Thomas Jefferson held this belief:
      - That Matthew, Mark, Luke and John passed along a corrupt version of Jesus. That one who was “enlightened” could see the true Jesus.
    - The Da Vinci Code movie portrayed this perspective.
      - Portrays some of the Gnostic beliefs especially the relationship between Jesus and Mary Magdalene.
  - The need to clearly establish the Orthodox beliefs was necessary to identify and eradicate the false teachers.
- Establishment of theology
  - Theology comes from two Greek words:
  - Theos – meaning God
  - Logos – meaning word (Word of God) or reason (cause or explanation).

- Theology is simply the study of God.
- Theology is man's understanding of what God has revealed to us so that we can express it to others.
- One who studies theology is a theologian.
- All Christians are technically theologians if we study our Bible and seek to know more of God.
- The first few centuries produced several theologians who were apologists (defenders) of the faith.
  - Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, Clement and Polycarp.
- Apologists
  - Christian apologists came about as a way to refute the false information and misunderstanding of what it meant to be a Christian.
  - Why the term can be confusing, they were not "apologizing" for being a Christian but providing evidence and answering the difficult questions.
  - Wild Examples:
    - Christians gathered to celebrate a "love feast" which was thought to be of a sexual nature.
    - Christians called each other brother and sister including their spouses. It was though they were involved with incest.
    - They thought communion consisted of Christians literally eating human flesh and drinking blood.
    - Christians were known to pick up abandoned infants, they assumed this is what they were eating.
  - Beyond these extreme examples, for those who did take time to study more said that they found Christianity to be for those who were ignorant.
    - The intellectuals of the day passed off Christianity as something only worthy for those of the simplest minds. That those who were intelligent and sophisticated were too far above it.
    - They felt that the only converts to Christianity would have be those who were the lowest of society both socially and intellectually.
  - Apologists came about to refute these and also those who did ask the hard questions that needed to be answered.
    - Celsus (2<sup>nd</sup> century), an intellectual of the day, who disregarded Christianity asked these questions:
      - If Jesus was the Son of God, why did he allow himself to be crucified?
      - Why did he not destroy all his enemies?
      - Why would God even visit earth?
      - Does he really know everything?
      - Why leave this life that is certain for a life that is uncertain (afterlife)?
    - Answering these questions and responding to the "intellectuals" of the day became the job of the apologists.
    - They sought to show that you can be intelligent, you can be a philosopher and yet still be a Christian.
- Terms given to right and wrong beliefs
  - Orthodoxy-
    - At its core orthodoxy means right belief or practice.
    - It also refers to the right belief that is officially embraced by the church.
    - If you follow the established beliefs of the church the you are "orthodox".



- Heresy
  - A heresy is simply a “wrong” belief.
  - A teaching held by a religious party which denies some aspect of established doctrine.
  - If someone stated that “Jesus is not the Son of God” then they would have committed a heresy and would be labeled a heretic.
  - As you can imagine in our modern day there are church’s who hold a specific belief that they consider orthodoxy while another would consider it a heresy.
  - The Roman Catholic Church considers Martin Luther and Protestantism heresy.
- Source of truth during the first two centuries.
  - The Bible (as we know it) did not yet exist as a complete book during the first and second century.
  - While the Bible had yet to be officially “canonized” the early church did have the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible), the Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) and numerous letters from Paul.
  - They early church looked to the Gospels and Paul’s letters as truth even though they did not fully realize that these documents were Gods’ inspired New Testament.
  - The canonization would come later towards the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.
- The primary “truth” that was proclaimed and protected in the early church was Christological.
  - Christology is the study (person and nature) and truth of Jesus Christ as recorded in the canonical Gospels and the epistles of the New Testament.
  - The chief truth that took priority for the early church was to clearly define who was Jesus Christ.
  - The Gospels proclaimed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, He was crucified, was buried and resurrected.
  - It is critical that this truth was proclaimed and wasn’t twisted.
- Apostles’ Creed
  - The first statement of faith or beliefs that cover the core doctrine of Scripture.
  - The Apostle’s Creed was not actually written by the apostles regardless of the name.
  - It was given this name because it came from the truth they proclaimed in their teachings and letters (Scriptures)
  - Its exact date or origin is unknown but was prior to the Council of Nicene where it was expanded upon.

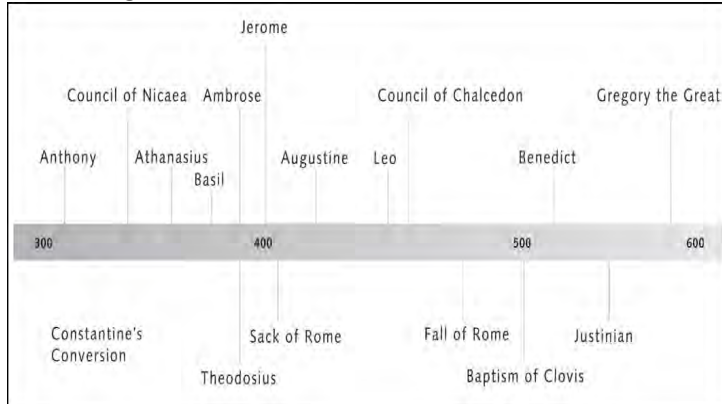
I believe in God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth And in Jesus Christ, his only begotten Son, our Lord. Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary. Suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead and buried; He descended into Hell The third day he rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost I believe a holy catholic church; the communion of saints the forgiveness of sins. The resurrection of the body and life everlasting. Amen.

- This seemingly simple creed emphasized what was most important to the early Christians which was Jesus Christ and His deity.
- This was necessary because without a proper understanding of Jesus (Christology) there was no Christianity!



## The Age of the Christian Roman Empire A.D. 312-590

### ➤ Significant Events:



### ➤ Introduction:

- Prior to 312 A.D. Christians were persecuted and arrested for simply being a Christian.
- To be a Christian meant you had the possibility of being killed because of your beliefs.
- Christians were not able to freely worship in public
- However, there was an amazing turn of events with the conversion of Emperor Constantine to Christianity.
- Christians came out of the shadows and were now able to worship in the open.
- Christianity was no longer just a religion for the poor but it was the religion of those in the palace.
- While this was a good thing we will see this also brought in new problems for Christianity.
- When the church and state merge together you now have “interference” in the affairs of the church.

### ➤ The Diocletianic Persecution (303-311)

- Before this great time period of having a Christian emperor, there was one more persecution that would prove to be greater than Nero's.
- Satan sought to purge Christianity from the empire.
- Prior to Constantine taking control of Rome he was preceded by Diocletian who took the throne in 284 A.D.
- Diocletian had brought structure to a crumbling empire because within the 3<sup>rd</sup> century there were 30 emperors who had claimed the throne. As soon as an emperor took power he was soon killed.
- He took power and he split control of Rome into 2 pieces (East and West) that were ruled by an Augusti (Emperor) and a slightly subordinate Caesar.
  - West- Maximian and Constantius
  - East- Diocletian and Galerius
- In 303 A.D during the last two years of his reign he turned on the Christians. He purged his army, destroyed buildings, prohibited Christian worship, burned the Scriptures and tortured the bishops.
- He forced his fellow rulers to follow suit especially Galerius who tried very hard to eradicate Christianity.

- In 305 Diocletian stepped down as emperor but the persecution continued under Galerius (who was promoted to emperor).
- This was the persecution of persecutions. It is only by the divine providence of God that Diocletian ultimately failed.
- In 311 Galerius (on his death bed) came to the realization that even with the extreme persecutions he had failed to eradicate and convert the Christians back to the pagan religion.
- The Christians even in the face of death, stood firm and Christianity survived.
- The last official act of Galerius was to issue an edict of toleration for Christians. This essentially brought an end to the last and worst persecution of Christians by Rome
- Ironically the worst persecution of the Christians ultimately led to the greatest support and growth of Christians in the Roman Empire.
- The rise of Constantine
  - Constantine was introduced to Christianity at a young age by his mother Helena.
  - While the exact date of his conversion is not known history shows us the impact it had on his life.
  - Constantine didn't stay in the West for long however, he was sent east as a military officer under the emperor Diocletian and Galerius.
  - In 305 Constantine's father Constantius was promoted to emperor and so he returned to serve under his father.
  - However, his father soon died in 306 which set off a series of civil wars within the roman empire.
  - The armies under Constantius immediately recognized Constantine as the senior western emperor.
  - However, Galerius only wanted to recognize him as a Caesar, so this obviously stirred civil conflict.
  - Constantine conquers the East and rises to power
    - In 312 AD after the death of Galerius Constantine advanced across the Alps to attempt to overcome his rival Maxentius to capture Rome.
    - It was this battle that Constantine put his trust in the God of the Christians.
    - He met his enemy at the Milvian Bridge which was just outside of the walls of Rome.
    - This was an interesting choice by Maxentius because all wars previously took place within the fortified city of Rome.
    - Maxentius was a pagan and he consulted his soothsayers/oracles before battle.
    - His oracles provided him a prophecy saying "the enemy of the Romans" would perish. Bolstered by this he left the safety of the city and ran out into battle.
    - Was the divine providence of God at work?
    - Constantine (just prior to his attack) had a dream where he saw a cross (or Chi-Rho) in the sky and the words "In this sign conquer".
    - Chi-Rho (XP) or Christogram:
    - A Graphic symbol of Christ.
    - Symbol was formed from the first two letters (X and P) of the Greek word for Christ.

χριστός (*christos*).



- Greek:
  - When he awoke he determined this was a sign from God and proceeded to put the symbol on the shields of the soldiers.
  - This convinced him to advance and he was successful in battle and he defeated the greater army (4x larger) of Maxentius.
  - So was this God's divine providence?
  - Constantine looked upon his success as proof of the power of Christ and the superiority of the Christian religion.
  - Eventually by 324 AD Constantine became the sole ruler of both west and the east and Christianity became the religion of the empire.
- Issues with the state being "Christian"
- Believers previously were persecuted. So those who were Christians were likely "true Christians" because to claim to be one was to risk death.
  - With the state and the emperor being Christian you had those attending church and claiming to be Christians only for political purposes.
  - Constantine ruled Christian bishops as he did his civil servants and he required obedience to his official pronouncements even if it contradicted or interfered with purely church matters.
  - So while having the backing of the state was good there are problems when the state trumps Christian teachings.
  - The teachings of the Bible are always supreme to the Christian.
- Concerns when the church has the power of the state.
- In 380 under emperor Theodosius he rewarded Christians but gave political and social penalties for non-Christians.
  - Belief in Christianity was a matter of imperial command.
    - "It is Our Will that all the peoples we rule shall practice that religion which the divine Peter the Apostle transmitted to the Romans. We shall believe in the single Deity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, under the concept of equal majesty and of the Holy Trinity. We command that those persons who follow this rule shall embrace the name of Catholic Christians. The rest, however, whom We adjudge demented and insane, shall sustain the infamy of heretical dogmas, their meeting places shall not receive the name of churches, and they shall be smitten first by divine vengeance and secondly by the retribution of Our own initiative.
- Introduction of wealth to the church
- With the marriage of the emperor and church you now have a significant influx of wealth within the church.
  - Constantine used this wealth to build a Basilica to Peter in Rome.
  - Today a Basilica is a name given to an important church that has been given special ceremonial rights by the Pope.
  - In the case of the Basilica of St. Peter Catholic tradition hold that it is built upon the burial site of the Apostle Peter.
  - These Basilica's are very large and ornate and cost millions of dollars to build.



- While wealth in the church can be used for good, it can also be used to focus too much on material beauty and less on helping the poor and helpless.
  - This is one of the concerns that Martin Luther had with the Roman Catholic Church included in his 95 theses.
  
- Council of Nicaea – 325 A.D.
  - In 325 Constantine called the bishops of the various churches together for a meeting to discuss matters of church doctrine.
  - He was receiving requests from various Christians demanding that he use the power of the state to banish others from the church because of their differences in doctrine.
  - This was discouraging for Constantine because he viewed Christianity as universal and there should be unity.
    - This is still a time period where Christianity is still generally under the same umbrella.
    - The beginning of the separation of the church due to Roman Catholicism and the papacy began in the 5<sup>th</sup> century under Leo.
  - He sought to get the various leaders of the church together to sort out their differences which is why he called the council of Nicaea.
  - The primary issue for discussion was the relation between Jesus, God and the Holy Spirit or as we know it the Trinity.
  - Various churches were dealing with the influence and heretical teachings of Arius whose beliefs are referred to as Arianism.
  - Arianism held that Jesus was creation and a lesser being than God.
  - This view was rejected by most of the bishops however Arius was gathering a large following in his church and among the people.
    - It was easier for a gnostic to understand his teachings of Jesus and God if they were separate instead of the explanation of the Trinity.

- During the council Aries tried to push his views but he was quickly denounced and rejected. A creed was signed by all 300 bishops in attendance except for 2 (Arius and another) to establish their belief in the Trinity.
  - An insertion to the Apostles Creed was made to further clarify their belief of the Trinity.
    - “True God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father.”
  - The truth of the Bible giving us the relation between God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit rightfully was the belief of the early Christians.
- Other councils:
- Through the year’s other councils met to further establish the church’s stance on Christology and the rejection of heretics.

<b>Christology of the Early Councils</b>				
“In Jesus Christ, true deity [against Arius] and full humanity [against Apollinaris] are indivisibly united in one person [against Nestorius] without being confused [against Eutyches].”				
<b>Council</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Accused Heretic</b>	<b>Accused Heretic Failed to Affirm . . .</b>	<b>Accused Heretic . . .</b>
Nicaea	325	Arius	Full deity of the Son	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Taught that Son is begotten/created/a created being.</li> <li>• Son is not eternal or coeternal; “there was a time when he was not.”</li> <li>• Son does not share in the Father’s essence or nature.</li> <li>• Son is a lesser god.</li> </ul>
Constantinople	381	Apollinaris	Full humanity of the Son	Taught that Jesus had a human body and a lower soul; his human higher soul—his rationality or mind—had been replaced by the divine word or logos; this logos was steady and immutable.
Ephesus	431	Nestorius	The union of the divine and human natures	Held only a moral or volitional union between divine and human; danger inherent in typically Antiochian conjunctive Christologies (illustration: man and woman choosing to be married).
Chalcedon	451	Eutyches	The distinctiveness and coexistence of the divine and human natures	Held to a mingling of both into one; danger inherent in typically Alexandrian unitive Christologies (illustration: drop of honey added to the ocean).



## The Beginnings of the Church in the East

- While Rome had been seen as the unofficial head of the church, Constantine soon changed this.
- In 330 Constantine moved his imperial residence to the “New Rome” which was to the ancient city of Byzantium which was renamed to Constantinople.
- With the imperial residence now being in the East that is where the political power was now centered, which would have an effect on the “head” of the church.



- Since Constantine was a Christian and his successor Theodosius made Christianity the state church, it was obvious that the influence and perception as to the head of the church would change from Rome to Constantinople.
- This was seen very clearly when in 381 Emperor Theodosius called the council of Constantinople and only invited the bishops from the East so ignoring Damasus who was the Bishop of Rome.
- The council promoted the bishop of Constantinople to a position of authority just after the bishop of Rome because the emperor’s city was considered the “New Rome”.
- Damasus the bishop of Rome, objected to the action and later a synod in Rome (382) made it their official belief that:
  - “The Holy Roman Church takes precedence over the other churches, not on the ground of any synodal (council) decisions but because it was given the primacy by the words of

our Lord and redeemer in the Gospel, when he said, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.”

- While he acknowledged that the East was responsible for sending the apostles, but that was not as significant as the martyrdom of both Peter and Paul.
- Since Peter and Paul both died in Rome their merit counted towards the church.
- This set the first mention of the “primacy” (authority) of the Roman Church which was a prelude to Leo.
- We also have the beginnings of the great conflict that ultimately led to the “East-West Schism” in the 11<sup>th</sup> century.



## The Holy Bible – Old Testament

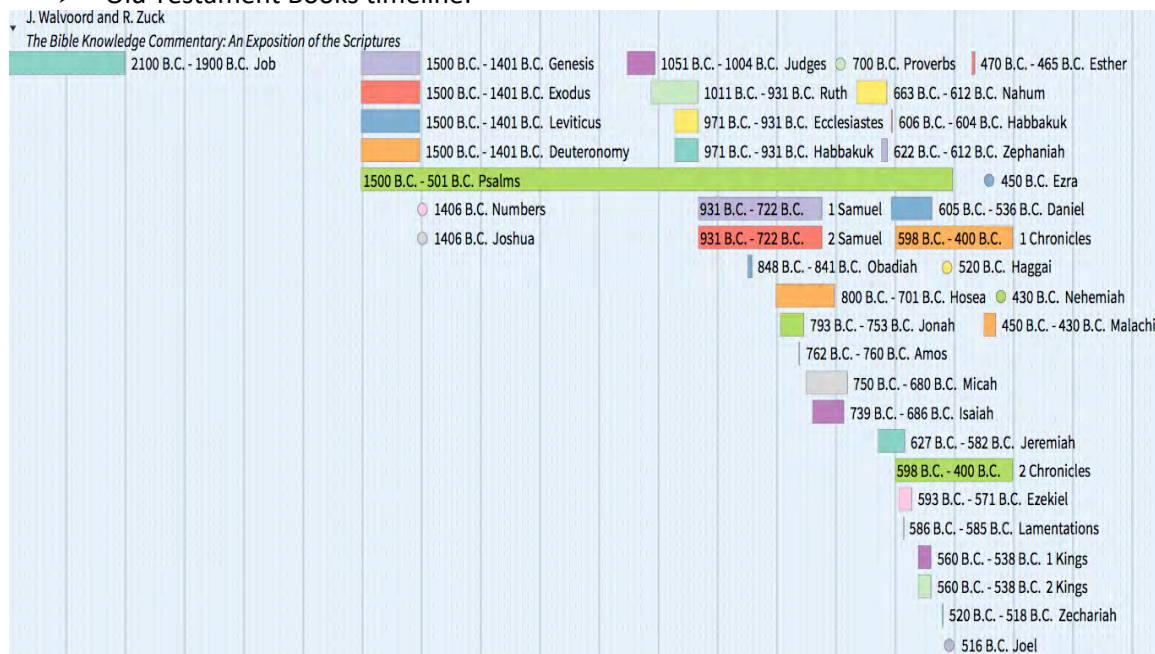
### Relationship between the Old and New Testaments

- Old Testament:
  - The old covenant relationship between God and man.
  - It foretold of the coming of Jesus Christ and paved the way for the atoning sacrifice on the cross.
- New Testament:
  - The fulfillment of this covenant that God had made.
  - Jesus came into the world to fulfill the promises that were previously made.
- The New Testament does not replace or make null the Old.
- They are both authoritative Scripture of God's Word to mankind.

### Early Christian perspective of the Old Testament

- For the early Christians the Old Testament was of course already finished.
- The time of the prophets had ended around 430 B.C. with Malachi being the last prophet called by God.
- The Jewish scribes compiled the various writings of Moses and the Prophets together into what was called the Hebrew Bible or the Tanakh.
- Tanakh
  - This word was formed by the first Hebrew letter for the 3 divisions of the Old Testament.
  - Torah – First 5 books of the Bible (Gen-Deut)
  - Nevi'im – Prophets (Isaiah, Jeremiah, Amos...)
  - Ketuvim – Writings (Proverbs, Job, Psalms...)

### ➤ Old Testament Books timeline:



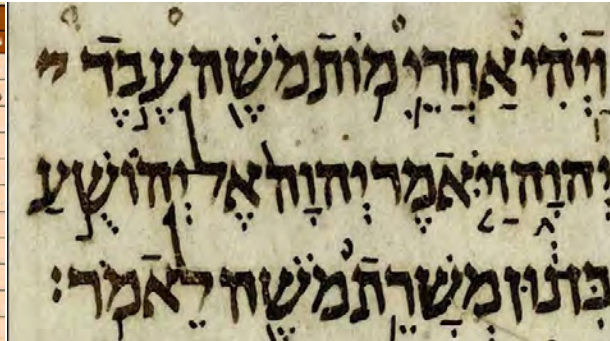
- The Greek speaking Hellenistic Jews called them "ta biblia" or "the books".

- It was divided into 3 Sections: Torah – Prophets (Nev'im) – Writings (Ketuvim)
- The early Christians began calling it the “Old Testament” in the first couple of centuries A.D.
- There is not an exact date but the early Christian writers like Origen (who lived in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century) referred to it in his writings.
- The Jews and the early Christians did not question the authority or the canonization of the Hebrew Old Testament.
  - Neither did they question what books were considered inspired. They accepted all 39 books as we do today however they counted them differently and reported 24.
    - In the Tanakh (Old Testament) they combined several of them together.
      - Samuel, Kings and Chronicles were not separated into 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>.
      - Ezra & Nehemiah were one.
      - The minor prophets were combined and known as “The twelve”.
    - The Apocrypha (more on this later) were never part of the Hebrew Old Testament. They were introduced later in the Greek translation called the Septuagint.
  - They did not question the original Hebrew writings because they had complete faith and confidence in God. They were witnesses to all that God had done and they had the prophets who God used as a proxy to convey His Word.
  - They early Christians in the Ante-Nicene (AD 70-312) era also had no trouble accepting the Old Testament.
  - It was vouched for by the apostles and Jesus Christ.
    - Luke 24:44
      - “Then He told them, “These are My words that I spoke to you while I was still with you—that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms must be fulfilled.”
    - “...that everything written about Me in the Law of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms...”
      - We see Jesus referring to the three sections of the Tanakh
        - Law of Moses = Torah
        - Prophets = Prophets
        - Psalms = Writings
  - The Apostles quoted the Old Testament in numerous passages all throughout their letters.
    - They did generally quote from the Greek (Septuagint)
  - For the early Christian they were confident that the Old Testament was the authoritative and inspired Word of God.

## The origins of the Old Testament

- The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew.
  - It was the language of the ancient Israelites
- While 99.9% Hebrew a few passages were written in Aramaic (Genesis 31:47; Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Jeremiah 10:11)
- The Hebrew alphabet in its ancient form consists of 22 characters which were ALL consonants written from right to left.
  - Vowels were later added but not until 500 A.D

Ancient Semitic/Hebrew						
Early	Middle	Late	Name	Picture	Meaning	Sound
א	א	א	El	Ox head	Strong, Power, Leader	ah, eh
ב	ב	ב	Bet	Tent floorplan	Family, House, In	b, bh(v)
ג	ג	ג	Gim	Foot	Gather, Walk	g
ד	ד	ד	Dai	Door	Move, Hang, Entrance	d
ה	ה	ה	Hey	Man with arms raised	Look, Reveal, Breath	h, ah
ו	ו	ו	Waw	Tent peg	Add, Secure, Hook	w, o, u
ז	ז	ז	Zay	Mattock	Food, Cut, Nourish	z
ח	ח	ח	Hhet	Tent wall	Outside, Divide, Halt	hh
ט	ט	ט	Tet	Basket	Surround, Contain, Mud	t
י	י	י	Yad	Arm and closed hand	Work, Throw, Worship	y, ee
כ	כ	כ	Kaph	Open palm	Bend, Open, Allow, Tense	k, kh

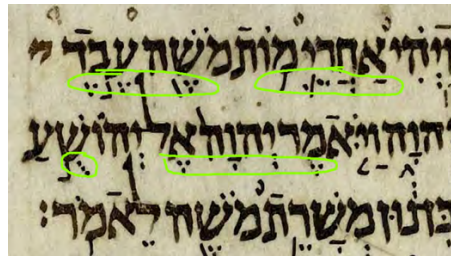


- However, after the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile in 538 B.C. they began to forget their native Hebrew and they adopted Aramaic.
- Aramaic in fact was a very common language that was spoken during the time of Jesus.
- The learned scribes and scholars would have to interpret the Scripture for a majority of the Jews because they could not read ancient Hebrew.
- This introduced what is known as the Aramaic Targum's.
  - These were interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures in Aramaic paraphrased from the original Hebrew text.
  - This was an oral tradition until it was written down in the Talmud in A.D. 200.
- The Hebrew language continued its decline as a spoken language and it never recovered.
- It was still studied and spoken however by those responsible for teaching and reading of the Scriptures.

## Timeline of the preservation of the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) through the Jewish scholars.

- 2000\* B.C – 450\* B.C – Levites
  - God used the Levites to preserve the Scriptures from the very beginning.
    - Deuteronomy 31:24-26
  - It was their responsibility to be sure that the Scriptures were maintained for hundreds of years.
- 400 B.C – 200 A.D. - The Sopherim period
  - Beginning with the great scribe of the Bible Ezra, there has been an order of scribes who were essentially Bible-text custodians.
  - In 458 B.C Ezra (the scribe-priest) took the lead in the preservation of Scripture. This is according to the Bible and Jewish tradition.
  - Ezra 7:6,10 and Nehemiah 8:1-9
  - Their job was to standardize a pure text from the Hebrew Scriptures that were taken from the available manuscripts.

- They did this with excruciating care to the sure that the copies (hand written) were accurate.
- To aid in the integrity of their copying process, they began counting all the words and letters of each book and appending the figures at the end.
- This way they could quickly determine if there were any errors in the transmission process.
- They only worked with the consonantal text (no vowels), as the vowel points were not added until A.D. 500 by the Masoretes.
- The vowels were maintained in a oral tradition known as the masorah.
- 100 A.D. – 500 A.D. - The Talmudic period
  - The line of scholars continued to keep the Scriptures (as copied the Sopherim) intact.
  - During this time period is when the oral tradition of the Jews was committed to writing in the Talmud.
  - This is NOT Scripture however. It is in separate writings outside of the Bible.
- 500 A.D. – 950 A.D. - Masoretic period
  - This is the last group of Jewish scholars that were responsible for the preservation up until 950 A.D.
  - We enjoy the fruits of their work today as the source for our translations of the Old Testament Scriptures.
  - In addition to preservation of the written text they took the oral preservation of the vowels and accents (masora), then created vowel points on the original Hebrew consonantal text.



- This provided the exact pronunciation and grammatical form.
- They also provided a moderate level of textual criticism. However, they did not change any of the original consonants but put them in the margin and put the vowel point into the original text.
- Masoretic Text
  - The results of the work of the Masoretes has been preserved in the work of the Ben Asher family.
    - There were multiple families of scholars.
  - There were the most accomplished group from the Masoretes and their work is the most complete and accurate.
  - Today the Hebrew Old Testament is commonly referred to as the Masoretic Text or MT.
    - Original Hebrew NOT the Greek Septuagint.
  - This is the source text for most modern day translations used within the protestant church.
    - The Greek Septuagint is used in some Catholic bibles, and various Orthodox churches (Eastern, Russian and Oriental)
  - One thing we know for sure, is that God was involved with the preservation of His Scriptures.

- We can take comfort knowing that the Hebrew text we have available today is the same as when God commanded it to be written.
  - Proof to this is given in the Qumran evidence (Dead Sea Scrolls) which show how the text from 200 BC is the same that we have today!
- Sources and order for modern day translations of the Old Testament.
  - While the Hebrew manuscripts are used first, scholars will also consult the later Aramaic, Greek and Latin translations.
  - And since 1947 the Dead Sea scrolls are also used.

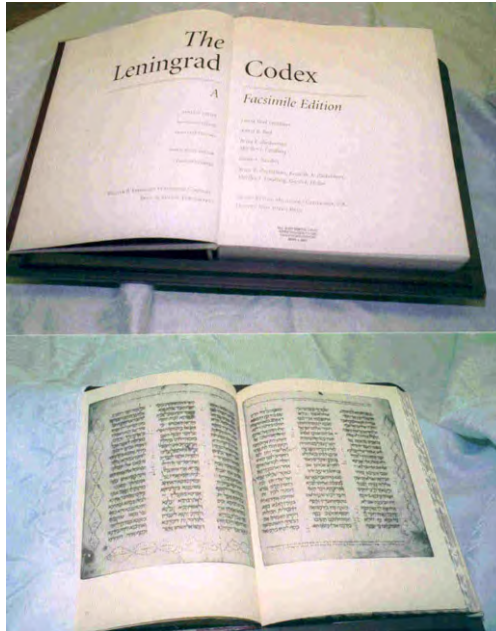
#### Masoretic Text sources used for translations

- Aleppo Codex - 950 A.D.
  - The Aleppo Codex is the oldest INCOMPLETE manuscript of the Masoretic/Ben Asher Text presently available.
    - It is called a “codex” because it is a handwritten book.
  - It is mostly intact but some of its contents have been lost/damaged.

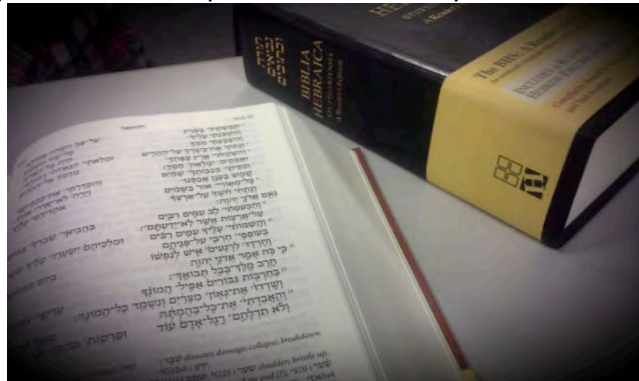


- Can be viewed online - <http://www.aleppocodex.org/>
- Leningrad Codex – 1008 A.D.
  - The Leningrad Codex is the oldest COMPLETE manuscript of the Masoretic/Ben Asher Text presently available.





- This is the standard text for Hebrew scholarship today that is used for translating the Old Testament.
- Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
  - This is a copy of the Leningrad Codex made for mass production and scholarly research.
  - This is what you will commonly find in the front of your Bibles as a source text.



- Summary of the preservation of the Hebrew Old Testament Scriptures.
  - Original writings given by God.
  - Preservation by the Levites.
  - The Sopherim period - Ezra and his scribes
  - The Talmudic period – Continued preservation by Jewish scholars
  - Masoretic period – Ben Asher Text/Masoretic Text
  - Aleppo/Leningrad Codex -> Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia
  - Modern day translations – NKJV and HCSB etc.,

## Dead Sea Scrolls

- The Dead Sea scrolls are ancient copies of biblical texts, hymn, prayers, rules, laws and also commentaries.
- They date from 300 B.C. to 135 A.D.
  - Which for the first time gave us a view into ancient Hebrew text 1000 years prior to the Aleppo Codex (950 A.D.).
- These scrolls were discovered in the year 1947.
- They were found by a group of Bedouin shepherds within a cave East of Jerusalem near the Dead Sea identified today as Qumran.
- The story goes that a shepherd left his flock of sheep to look for a stray and stumbled upon the cave. He threw a rock inside to hear the sound of breaking clay pots.
- These events set in motion the greatest discovery of ancient biblical texts.



- Over 200 Biblical manuscripts containing texts from all books of the Hebrew Bible (except Esther) were found in the caves varying from fragments to nearly complete Books.
- Perhaps the most significant find of the Biblical texts, was a nearly complete copy of the book of Isaiah from 125 B.C.
- This makes it the only known intact biblical book to have survived over two millennia.
- This scroll was found wrapped in a linen cloth and stored inside a jar. The scroll was 24 feet long containing 54 columns of text over 17 pieces of sheepskin sewn together to make a single scroll.
- Upon scholars having examined the various Biblical texts, they found that the existing Aleppo and Leningrad codices were ACCURATE.
  - There were some minor textual differences but nothing that “changed” the Scriptures.
- The work of the Jewish scholars in preserving the Hebrew Scriptures proved to be a success.
- The hand of God was at work to make sure that His Word was preserved FOREVER.



- Isaiah 40:8
  - “The grass withers, the flowers fade, but the word of our God remains forever”
- We can be confident in knowing that the integrity of the Scriptures has been maintained.

#### En-Gedi Scroll

- In 1970 a parchment of the Book of Leviticus was found in Ein Gedi Israel within a Torah Ark (storage for scrolls) within an ancient synagogue.
- This has been carbon dated to the third or fourth century CE/AD.



- What is really interesting about this, is that they found the text to be IDENTICAL to the Masoretic Text that we have dated nearly 600 years later.
- Again this is further evidence that the Scriptures have been well preserved.

#### The Greek Septuagint.

- The Septuagint was a Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible translated by 70 Jewish scholars in Alexandria of Egypt in 200 B.C. It is also known as the LXX attributing the Jewish scholars.
- The Septuagint was absolutely necessary and was used by Jesus and the apostles to reach the audience of their day.
- When the Old Testament is quoted in the New Testament it was from the Septuagint.
- The Septuagint also included the Apocrypha which were additional books that were not included in the original Hebrew Bible.

#### Use of the Masoretic text over the Septuagint

- Translators and scholars of protestant Bibles, use the Hebrew Bible as their source text
  - If we base our translation from the Greek, then we are making a translation of a translation which would be prone to error. It is best to use the original source.
- Inadequate preservation of the Septuagint
  - Unlike the Jewish scribes the Greek scribes did not have the same set of stringent rules of literal and meticulous accuracy that the Jewish scribes maintained.

## The Apocrypha

- The Apocrypha are 12-15 books (depending on grouping) that Christians today disagree on whether or not they were “inspired” Scripture.
- For example, the Roman Catholic and various Orthodox churches accept a portion of them as inspired, while protestants reject them.
- These books were not part of the Hebrew canon but were introduced in the Septuagint.
- They were written after the closing of the Hebrew Canon and before Jesus in 400-200 B.C.
- This was during a time period the Protestants refer to this as the “intertestamental period” (400 silent years) from Malachi to the Gospels.
  - There were no prophets or apostles to write God’s inspired Scripture.
- However Roman Catholic and Orthodox Christians refer to it as the deuterocanonical period.
  - This is the terminology they give the Apocrypha.
  - Deuterocanonical means literally “of the second canon”. They see it as the second canon of Scripture after the Hebrew Bible.
  - Deuterocanonical was first used in 1566 by the Catholic theologian Sixtus of Siena
- This larger canon including both Hebrew and the Apocrypha is called the “Alexandrian Canon”
  - This is because of the location of the translation done on the Septuagint being in Alexandria Egypt.
  - In comparison the Hebrew Text is referred to as the Palestine Canon.
- Books of the Apocrypha
  - 1 and 2 Esdras, Tobit, Judith, additions to Esther, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, Letter of Jeremiah, Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon, Prayer of Manasseh, 1 and 2 Maccabees.
- Books of the Apocrypha accepted by the Roman Catholic church in 1546
  - Tobit, Judith, Wisdom of Solomon, Sirach (Ecclesiasticus), Baruch, 1 and 2 Maccabees, additions to Esther and Daniel (Prayer of Azariah, Susanna, Bel and the Dragon) .
- Reasoning used to accept the Apocrypha
  - Jesus and the apostles referred to the Septuagint in their teachings.
    - However, neither Jesus or the apostles ever quoted or directly eluded to the Apocrypha.
    - While the Hebrew Scriptures are called out – “the Scriptures say”, “as it is written” or “thus says the Lord”.
  - It was accepted by some of the early Christian writers.
    - While some did voice support, very few put them on the same level as the rest of the Scriptures.
    - Augustine vouched for them but put greater importance on the Hebrew Canon and would not commit to them being canonical as the Hebrew Scriptures.
    - Jerome (who translated the Latin Vulgate) included the Apocrypha but he did not recognize them as having equal authority.
- Problems with the Apocrypha
  - When you compare the Apocrypha with the rest of Scripture you see many discrepancies and contradictions. They just don’t “fit”.
  - Time of writing
    - They were written 400-200 B.C. between the closing of the Jewish canon and the beginning of the New Testament. There were no prophets called by God during this time.



## The Holy Bible – New Testament

### Language of the New Testament

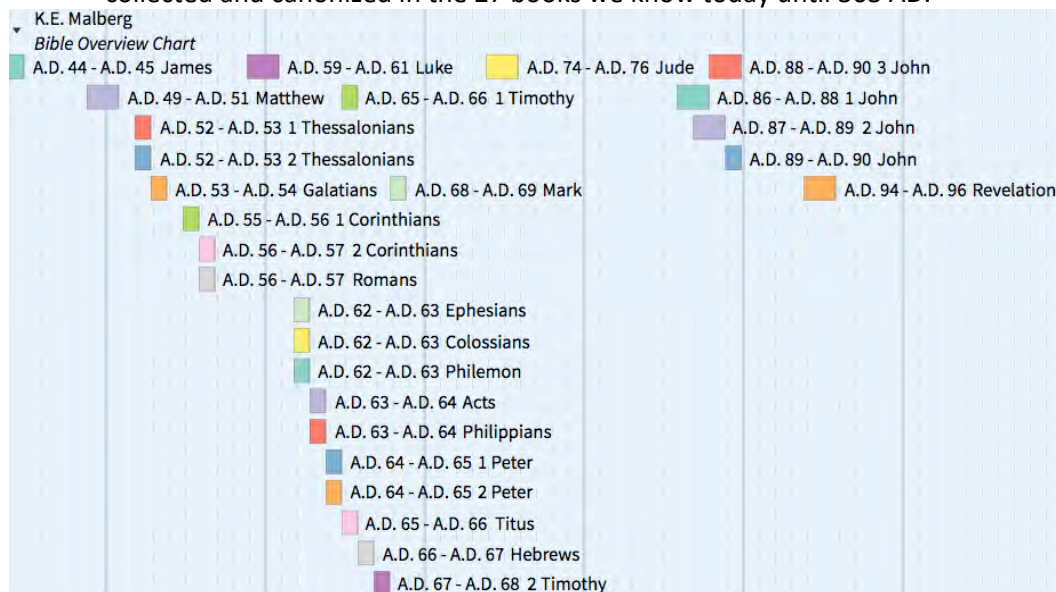
- The New Testament was written in Greek.
- It was “common” Greek in that it could be understood by almost anyone regardless of their level of education
- This was important so that the inspired message of God could be read and understood by anyone regardless of social class.

### New Testament Authorship

- The New Testament (like the Old) has 1 author and that is God.
- While man was used to actually scribe His truths, God was the inspiration behind it.
- Man however was not a robot but God inspired the Scripture to be written through the Holy Spirit.
- God has always used His messengers to deliver His Word.
  - In the Old Testament it was through prophets and priests that He called to receive and proclaim His inspired Word.
  - In the New Testament it was through the apostles, those who had direct contact with Jesus and those who worked directly with the apostles.

### The canonization of the New Testament

- The books of the New Testament were written in the first century however they were not collected and canonized in the 27 books we know today until 363 AD.



- Terms:
  - Canonical-
    - To state that a book is canonical means that it is inspired by God’s Holy Spirit as he worked through the men who wrote it. If canonical it is authoritative.
  - Canonization-

- A process where the people of God are recognizing and collecting the books that God inspired. The search to find God's completed work.

➤ Timeline for general canonization and acceptance in the church and the councils.

100	200	250	300	400
<p>Different parts of our New Testament were written by this time, but not collected and defined as "Scripture." Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writing and oral sources.</p> <p>Paul's letters were collected late in the first century. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were brought together by 150.</p>	<p><b>New Testament used in the church at Rome (the "Muratorian Canon")</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 &amp; 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 &amp; 2 Thessalonians 1 &amp; 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>James</p> <p>1 &amp; 2 John Jude Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon</p> <p><b>To be used in private, but not public, worship</b> The Shepherd of Hermas</p>	<p><b>New Testament used by Origen</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 &amp; 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 &amp; 2 Thessalonians 1 &amp; 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>1 Peter 1 John</p> <p>Revelation of John</p> <p><b>Disputed</b> Hebrews James 2 Peter 2 &amp; 3 John Jude The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Teaching of Twelve Apostles Gospel of the Hebrews</p>	<p><b>New Testament used by Eusebius</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 &amp; 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 &amp; 2 Thessalonians 1 &amp; 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>1 Peter 1 John</p> <p>Revelation of John (authorship in doubt)</p> <p><b>Disputed but well known</b> James 2 Peter 2 &amp; 3 John Jude</p>	<p><b>New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage</b></p> <p>Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 &amp; 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 &amp; 2 Thessalonians 1 &amp; 2 Timothy Titus Philemon</p> <p>Hebrews James 1 &amp; 2 Peter 1, 2, &amp; 3 John Jude Revelation of John</p> <p><b>To be excluded</b> The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter Didache</p>

➤ Methodology to determine if a book was canonical.

- Check the source
- Determine if the human author of the book was written by an apostle.
  - If the author was written by an apostle (or prophet) then the book had a high probability of being considered canonical.
  - This is because the apostles were different from any other man or Christian author.
  - They had a direct relationship with Jesus Christ.
    - 2 Peter 1:16
  - They took part in the earthly ministry of Jesus and witnessed the resurrection.
    - Acts 1:22-23 and Acts 10:41-42
  - They had a heightened relationship with the Holy Spirit as they could perform miracles.
    - Acts 5:12, 3:6-8
  - Paul made it clear that his writings were divine revelation from God.
    - Ephesians 3:1-5
  - Peter's statement of God's revelation through the Holy Spirit
    - 2 Peter 1:18-21
  - Peter considered Paul's letters to be Scripture
    - 2 Peter 3:15-16
  - The early church leaned upon the teaching of the Holy Spirit inspired apostles.
    - Ephesians 2:20
      - "built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone"
    - Acts 2:42a

- “And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teachings...”
      - The early Christians treasured the teachings of the apostles because their teacher was Jesus Christ.
  - If the author was someone who had direct contact with Jesus or His apostles, then they were given a thorough review.
    - James and Jude were brothers of Jesus.
    - Mark was an associate of Peter and Luke was an associate of Paul.
  - Circulation and reading of the apostle’s letters and their use in Christian worship.
    - The letters of the apostles were circulated among the early church’s long before they were officially brought together and canonized.
    - They were used in daily Christian worship and were read along with the Old Testament Scripture.
    - Colossians 4:16
      - “When this letter has been read among you, have it read also in the church of the Laodiceans; and see that you also read the letter from Laodicea.
    - 1 Thessalonians 5:27
      - “I charge you by the Lord that this letter be read to all the brothers.”
    - Revelation 1:10-11
      - “I was in the Spirit on the Lord’s day, and I heard a loud voice behind me like a trumpet saying, “write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: Ephesus, Symyrna, Pergamum, Thyatire, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea.”
    - Circulation and collection procedures.
      - The writings that were read as authoritative to the churches were circulated and collected.
      - In this way all the churches would have a copy of the various letters from the apostles.
  - Quotation of the letters by other apostles.
    - Many of the writers of the New Testament are quoted by other New Testament authors.
    - Jude quoted Peter, Peter verified Paul and Paul quoted Luke as examples.
    - While not all the New Testament Scripture can be verified this way the portions we do have given us the big picture perspective to see how they overall works fit together.
  - Summary of the primary tests to determine if a book is canonical
    - Apostolic authority.
    - Source had direct contact with Jesus or was an associate of one of His apostles.
    - Writings circulated, collected and quoted as part of the canon of the Scriptures in the early church.
- The perspective of the apostolic fathers and various early theologians on the New Testament.
  - If we examine the writings of the early apostolic fathers and theologians, we can see very clearly their perspective on the authority of the New Testament.
  - Augustine (354-430) – Theologian
    - “When they write that He has taught and said, it should not be asserted that he did not write it, since the members only put down what they had come to know at the dictation of the Head. Therefore, whatever He wanted us to read

concerning His words and deeds, He commanded His disciples, His hands, to write. Hence, one cannot but receive what he reads in the Gospels, though written by the disciples, as though it were written by the very hand of the Lord Himself”

- Irenaeus (130-202)
  - Bishop of Lyons (France)
  - Figure in the development of Christian doctrine in the west.
  - “For the Lord of all gave the power of the Gospel to His apostles, through whom we have come to know the truth, that is, the teaching of the Son of God. This Gospel they first preached. Afterwards, by the will of God, they handed it down to us in the Scriptures, to be “the pillar and ground” of our faith.”
- Origen (185-254)
  - Successor of Clement at the Catechetical School in Alexandria.
  - Scholar and theologian
  - He held a view that the Scriptures were written by the Spirit of God, and have a meaning...not known to all, but to those only on whom the grace of the Holy Spirit is bestowed in the words of wisdom and knowledge
- Tertullian (160-220)
  - Known as “The Father of Latin Theology”
  - He saw that all Christians have the Holy Spirit but not all are apostles.
  - “Apostles have the Holy Spirit properly, who have Him fully, in the operations of prophecy, and the efficacy of [healing] virtues, and the evidences of tongues; not particularly, as all others have”

Official recognition of the 27 books of the New Testament.

- In the 4<sup>th</sup> century the acceptance of the 27 books of the New Testament had gained widespread adoption.
- The questioning of the various books has ended and the New Testament has been canonized.
- Significant dates and councils recognizing the 27 books.
  - Synod of Laodicea – A.D. 363
  - Bishop Athanasius of Rome – A.D. 367
  - \*\*Council of Nicaea (335-340) – Disputed James 2 Peter, 2<sup>nd</sup> + 3<sup>rd</sup> John.
  - Synod of Hippo (393)
  - Council of Carthage (397+419)

100	200	250	300	400
Different parts of our New Testament were written by this time, but not collected and defined as "Scripture." Early Christian writers (for example Polycarp and Ignatius) quote from the Gospels and Paul's letters, as well as from other Christian writing and oral sources.  Paul's letters were collected late in the first century. Matthew, Mark, and Luke were brought together by 150.	<b>New Testament used in the church at Rome (the "Muratorian Canon")</b>  Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon  James  1 & 2 John Jude Revelation of John Revelation of Peter Wisdom of Solomon  <b>To be used in private, but not public, worship</b> The Shepherd of Hermas	<b>New Testament used by Origen</b>  Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon 1 Peter 1 John  Revelation of John  <b>Disputed</b> Hebrews James 2 Peter 2 & 3 John Jude The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Teaching of Twelve Apostles Gospel of the Hebrews	<b>New Testament used by Eusebius</b>  Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon  1 Peter 1 John  Revelation of John (authorship in doubt)  <b>Disputed but well known</b> James 2 Peter 2 & 3 John Jude	<b>New Testament fixed for the West by the Council of Carthage</b>  Four Gospels Acts Paul's letters: Romans 1 & 2 Corinthians Galatians Ephesians Philippians Colossians 1 & 2 Thessalonians 1 & 2 Timothy Titus Philemon Hebrews James 1 & 2 Peter 1, 2, & 3 John Jude Revelation of John  <b>To be excluded</b> The Shepherd of Hermas Letter of Barnabas Gospel of the Hebrews Revelation of Peter Acts of Peter Didache

Preservation and fidelity (accuracy)



➤ Greek Manuscripts

- There are over 5000 manuscripts that contain fragments, partial and whole copies of the New Testament in Greek. No other ancient book even comes close.

RELIABILITY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT					
Author/ Book	Date Written	Earliest Copies	Time Gap	No. of Copies	Percent Accuracy
Hindu Mahābhārata	≈ 13th cent. B.C.				90
Homer, <i>Iliad</i>	≈ 800 B.C.			643	95
Herodotus <i>History</i>	≈ 480-425 B.C.	≈ C. A.D. 900	c. 1,350 yrs	8	?
Thucydides, <i>History</i>	≈ 460-400 B.C.	≈ C. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs	8	?
Plato	≈ 400 B.C.	≈ C. A.D. 900	c. 1,300 yrs	7	?
Demosthenes	≈ 300 B.C.	≈ C. A.D. 1100	c. 1,400 yrs	200	?
Caesar, <i>Gallic Wars</i>	≈ 100-44 B.C.	≈ C. A.D. 900	c. 1,000 yrs	10	?
Livy, <i>History of Rome</i>	≈ 59 B.C. - ≈ A.D. 17	≈ 4th cent. (partial) mostly ≈ 10th cent.	c. 400 yrs	1 partial 19 copies	?
Tacitus, <i>Annals</i>	≈ A.D. 100	≈ C. A.D. 1100	c. 1,000 yrs	20	?
Pliny Secundus, <i>Natural History</i>	≈ A.D. 61-113	≈ C. 850	c. 750 yrs	7	?
New Testament	≈ A.D. 50-100	≈ C. 114 (fragment) ≈ C. 200 (books) ≈ C. 250 (most of N.T.) ≈ C. 325 (complete N.T.)	±50 yrs 100 yrs 150 yrs 225 yrs	5366	99+

- Homer, *Iliad* is the closest at 643 copies...while the New Testament has over 5300!
- Greek Manuscript Examples:
  - The John Ryland's Fragment of John 18:31-33 A.D. 117-138
    - It is the OLDEST manuscript (fragment)
    - On display at the John Ryland's University Library Manchester, UK



- Chester Beatty Papyri A.D.250
  - Contains most of the New Testament
  - Located in the Beatty Museum near Dublin



- Codex Sinaiticus A.D. 340
  - Oldest complete\* (lacks 2 passages) copy of the New Testament.
  - [Codexsinaiticus.org/en/](http://Codexsinaiticus.org/en/)



John Chapter 3 Verse 16 Quire: Bc Folio: 2 r

John, 2:17 - 3:25 library: BL folio: 248 scribe: A

Image Translation Transcription Physical Description

Image Standard Light Raking Light

Transcription view by verse view by page

2:17 The disciples remembered that it is written: Zeal for thy house consumes me.

18 The Jews then answered and said to him: What sign showest thou to us, that thou doest these things?

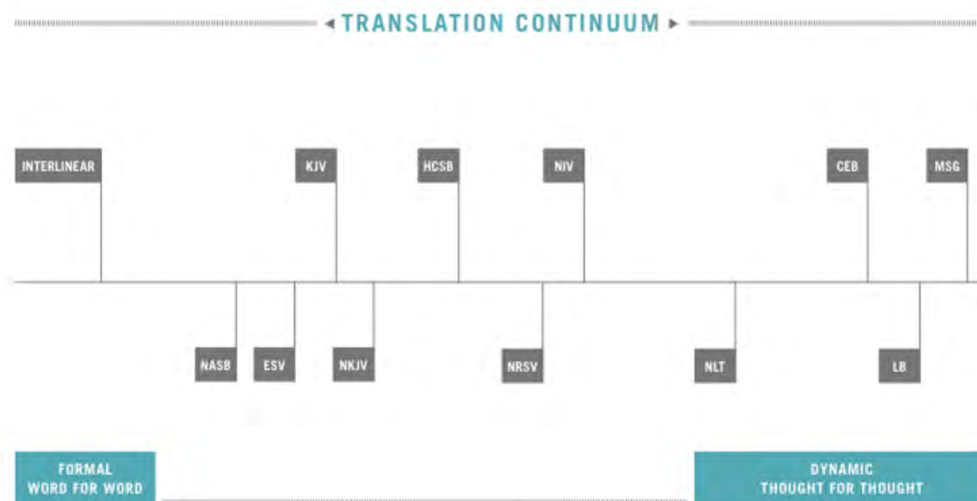
19 Jesus answered and said to them: Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.

20 The Jews therefore said: Forty and six years was this temple

- In 1933 the British government purchased it for their library for \$500,000 (10.5 Million today)
- Ancient Versions (translation)

- The Latin Vulgate A.D. 382
  - St. Jerome translated the original Hebrew and Greek into Latin.
  - There are over 8000 copies of this work which is very helpful to Scholars.
  - While his version is a Latin translation, Jerome would have had access to manuscripts we do not currently possess today.
- Our modern day translations use the combination of thousands of manuscripts to ensure an accurate translation.
- The differences we find between modern versions like NKJV, NIV, ESV and NLT are not necessarily because of manuscripts, but of the interpretation of the scholar and methods used to bring clarity to the Scriptures.

### Philosophies of translation



- Formal Equivalence (word-for-word)
  - Focus on the exactness of text.
  - Translators attempt a word-for-word translation (which cannot be done exactly)
  - Examples:
    - KJV-King James Version-1611
    - NKJV-New King James Version-1982
    - ESV- English Standard Version-2001
    - NASB-New American Standard Bible-1995
- Dynamic Equivalence (thought-for-thought)
  - Focus on readability and the accuracy of meaning rather than on the precise form of the original word.
  - The scholars endeavor to create a translation that gives contemporary readers an experience similar to the way the Bible was heard and understood in its original setting.
  - Examples:
    - NLT-New Living Translation-1996
    - CEV-Contemporary English Version-1995
    - NCV-New Century Version-1991
- Hybrid: word-for word/thought-for-thought

- These translations find a balance between formal and dynamic equivalence.
- Examples:
  - NIV-New International Version-1978
  - HCSB-Holman Christian Standard Bible-2000
  - NET-New English Translation-1989
- Paraphrase
  - The goal is not translation but to tell the Bible in way that is understandable.
  - Basically takes thought for thought a bit further.
  - Examples:
    - The Message-2002
    - LB-Living Bible-1971
- Which translation is best for me?
  - What are you going to use it for?
  - Personal/casual Bible Study
  - Careful/detailed Bible Study
  - All-around

#### The closed canon of the Bible

- Since the canonization of the New Testament it has been considered closed.
- It is closed because the inspired apostles have passed away so the canon was closed with them.
- While good Christian authors who are filled with the Holy Spirit are numerous and have existed since the time of the apostolic fathers, their writings (however true and good to read) are not inspired or the authoritative Word of God.
- There are religions that call themselves Christians who do not believe in a closed canon and that God calls modern day prophets who He gives inspired Scripture.
  - Example: Mormons and Jehovah Witnesses

## **Beginnings of Monasticism**

- Overview:
  - Monasticism is what we know as a monk or nun.
  - To be a monk was to practice severe self-discipline and to abstain from all forms of indulgences.
  - This perspective held that by rejection of the wants of the flesh that it would free the soul to commune with God.
  - The early monks were essentially hermits who lived alone in a secluded area and rejected the comforts of society.
    - The word “monk” is derived from the Greek word “monachos” which means solitary.
    - They rejected marriage, chose celibacy and poverty.
  - They looked only towards the spiritual rewards of self-discipline.
- Monasticism - a response to the new Christianity.
  - Under the rule of Constantine, Christianity has now become the religion of the empire and Christians no longer feared to publicly identify as one.
  - There were mass conversions and people being baptized.
  - Most would see this as a good thing, however this wasn't the case.
  - Previously true Christians were identified because of their unwavering faith even in the face of death.
  - Those who truly believed would rather die or face great persecutions than to deny their faith.
  - But now it seemed that everyone was a Christian and the narrow gate that Jesus spoke of was wide open, and those entering were not doing it for the right reasons.
  - That previously Christianity was for the poor and it was difficult for the rich to believe.
  - Now the church leaders are living luxuriously, with large homes and expensive church buildings.
  - Had the church fallen into Satan's trap by embracing this?
  - The response to this was to remove oneself from the amenities of the world and to live a life of solitude.
- Perceived benefits:
  - If one would flee from society, then one would be free from all the temptations of sin.
  - Examples: Greed and lust.
  - That by living comfortably one would not be able to handle the trials of persecution when they returned.
  - One could more resemble our crucified Lord who had no place to lay His head.
  - This lifestyle was looked upon as a substitute for spiritual heroism that was visible during times of great persecution.
  - Beginning in the second century there was a perception that there were different levels of morality (right and wrong living)
  - This is seen in “The Shepherd of Hermas” as it provided advice on how to aspire to more than an ordinary Christian.
  - One could either be an average Christian who still enjoyed the indulgences of a normal life or one could seek a higher level and live a life of self-denial.

- The early Christians including some of the well-known theologians (Tertullian and Origen) believed that by denying oneself that you could achieve a more holy life and that it would provide penance (forgiveness of sins).
- Lifestyle and Beginnings:
  - For the first monk\* (Anthony or Saint Anthony the Great 251-356 A.D.) life began as a hermit in Egypt. He sought to remove himself from the world so that he would not be tempted to sin, he struggled with salvation since he had sinful thoughts.
    - \*While Anthony is perceived as the first monk this is impossible to know. Perhaps the first well known would be better.
  - He was inspired by the passage in Scripture about the rich young ruler. Mark 10:17-27
  - Anthony sold all that he had and retreated to the desert in Egypt to begin his life of solitude.
  - While the monk living in solitude or a monastery may have removed themselves from the worldly temptation, it is impossible to remove oneself from sin.
  - One could be prideful about how “good” of a monk they were.
  - Their lifestyle slowly changed from individual seclusion to a monastery where they would live with other monks who shared the same perspective.
  - This form of monasticism is called “cenobitic” which means “communal life”.
  - There were various reasons but one was they did realize that Scripture taught them to “love others” and this was difficult to fulfill living in solitude. So they could now love their fellow monk.
- The Spread of the Monastic Ideal – Martin of Tours
  - One of the most well-known early monks that spread the ideal of monasticism was a man named Martin, who later became the Bishop of Tours.
  - There was a book written about his life called “The Life of Saint Martin” that had a great influence on Christians to peruse the monastic lifestyle especially as a Bishop.
  - Martin was saved has a child against his parents’ wishes and was sent to the army.
  - There was a time where he encountered a beggar whom asked for alms, but he had none. It was freezing outside, so Martin took his sword and cut his cape in half and gave it to the man.
  - That night he had a dream where he saw Jesus who told him “Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these by brethren, you did it to me”
  - This event heavily influenced him to pursue the monastic life after he left the military. It was wildly believed that God performed great works through him, but he was extremely humble.
  - He was eventually elected to be the bishop of Tours where the other church leaders believed it was of divine appointment.
  - Interesting note – Origin of the word chapel
    - A piece of his cape that he used to share with the beggar was kept as a relic in numerous small temporary churches built to house it.
    - They called the piece of his cape a “capella” which means “little cloak”
    - These little churches soon came to be called a “chapel” and those who served in it, “chaplains”.
    - Later all small churches took on the name of chapel.
- Impact:
  - The monks did make several contributions to Christianity over the years and helped it spread during the Middle Ages.



- The monks had a hand in the preservation of Christianity during the middle ages through having a safe place for scholarly work, protection and rest.
- In fact, many early church leaders came from the monastery.
- Augustine, Jerome and even Martin Luther (16<sup>th</sup> Century)
- Monasticism and the protestant church.
  - The need for a monk is not accepted by the protestant church.
  - While there is nothing wrong with being a dedicated Christian, Christ has called us to be active and to be a light into the world.
  - Protestants reject the upper and lower levels of Christianity. That there is only one way to Christ and that is by faith alone.
  - The common life of a monk was seclusion from the world while Christ called us to love and care of others.
  - While the things of the world can be used for evil they are also God's gift to man that He gave us to enjoy.

## Ambrose of Milan

- Ambrose was made the bishop of Milan of the West (in Northern Italy) in 373 B.C.



- He was born into power from a influential Roman family of Aurelius and was visited by the reigning pope and church dignitaries when he was a child.
- So before he was even 30 years of age he was made the governor in Italy's northern provinces.
- His time for appointment to the role of bishop however was unexpected.
  - When the current bishop had passed away he attended the meeting where church leaders were looking for a replacement just to observe.
  - However contrary to his wishes he was elected to serve as the bishop.
  - So unexpected he even ran away for a time from this role.
  - After being arrested and having his hand forced he accepted this position
- Ambrose was orthodox which is to say (for this time period) he was not Arian.
  - Even after the Council of Nicea there were still those who fully supported the Arian perspective.
  - However, Ambrose would have none of it.
  - Ambrose wrote several works against the Arians.
    - On the Faith, The Mystery of the Lord's Incarnation, and On the Holy Spirit.
- Accomplishments of Ambrose
  - Ambrose is credited to being the primary influence for hymn singing in the West.
  - Ambrose was also a musician and had studied the Greek language and their culture, so he brought that into the church.
  - Ambrose baptized a young Augustine
  - Ambrose was known as one of the greatest preachers of his time, known for his powerful sermons that would move the listeners.
  - Especially being able to move people to the life of monasticism and to withdraw from worldly desires.
  - His greatest feat though would be his influence upon the emperors.
    - Three times Ambrose stood up to the emperors and won. His influence as the bishop of the church in the West was unprecedented.
    - In 390 local authorities imprisoned a charioteer of Thessalonica for homosexuality. But he was a favorite of the fans and a riot broke out which ended up in the murder of the governor and others.
    - Emperor Theodosius had his revenge by locking the gates at the next chariot race and had over 7000 people slain.
    - Ambrose demanded repentance from Theodosius and he forbade the emperor to attend worship until he would prostrate himself at the altar.

- Amazing Theodosius obeyed marking the first time the church held power of the state.
- This began a precedent for the West, where the bishops of Rome held great power even above the state.
- This is in contrast to the East, where the emperors there did not allow that same influence of the church.
- Bishops there were under complete control of the emperor.

### Jerome

- Jerome was a scholar who is known for his translation of the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures into Latin known as the Vulgate.
- He lived from 348-420 in Northern Italy.
- His early life was filled with classical learning, which at the time was more of a pagan tradition which he felt was sinful but couldn't turn away.
- However, he had dream one evening where he found himself at the final judgment and was asked:
  - Who are You? He replied "I am a Christian". But the judge said "you lie! You are a Ciceronian"
  - This implied that he cared for the pagan non-Christian writings more than being a Christian.
- After that Jerome devoted himself to the study of Scripture and Christian literature.
- He soon turned to the life of a monk and lived in seclusion.
  - He had problems controlling his sexual desires so this life assisted him to deal with it.
  - He was very unkempt and felt that since he was washed by Christ there was not reason to even bath.
  - He soon decided that he should learn the Hebrew language since if the Old Testament was written in it, that it must be divine.
  - This would prove to be important a few years later.
- After a few years of being a monk and deciding it wasn't the life for him, he returned to the world and became a presbyter in Antioch.
- In 381 he became the private secretary of the Bishop Damasus of Rome who persuaded Jerome to translate the Scriptures into Latin.
- Jerome knowing Hebrew was able to translate the original Hebrew Scriptures into Latin, which was a first because all they had at this point was translations from the Septuagint (Greek translation).
- He also realized that the original Hebrew did not include the Apocrypha, but felt pressured to include it.
  - He felt that they were good church books but were not inspired Scriptures.
- With the finished Vulgate his work was set to be used in the Latin churches for another thousand years.

## Augustine of Hippo

- Augustine became the bishop of Hippo (North Africa) just before the year 400.
- He is one of the most well-known figures for the early church primarily because of his work as a theologian and his writings.
- And there is perhaps no other figure that is revered as much between two different polarized groups of Christians.
  - He was respected and some of his teachings embraced by the Roman Catholic Church.
    - Dispensing of grace through the sacraments and baptismal regeneration. (further defined later)
  - He is also the favorite theologian of the reformers during the protestant reformation and modern day Calvinistic protestants today.
    - Predestination and irresistible grace (further defined later)
  - His other views are upheld by non-Calvinistic protestants.
    - Original sin and one cannot become a Christian without God.
  - Everyone can find common ground with Augustine, but it would be difficult to find someone who agreed with everything he believed.
- You could say that Augustine was a Christian philosopher.
  - He is embraced today by those who enjoy looking at Christianity from the perspective of philosophy.
- Augustine's early life
  - Augustine grew up with a pagan father and a devout Christian mother.
  - In his early years he strived to set aside the beliefs that his mother had put in him and he lived a life fulfilling the desires of the flesh.
  - He had become a professor of rhetoric which was a discipline that focused on how to speak and to write elegantly and convincingly regardless of truth.
  - However, after studying Cicero (Roman philosopher) he had felt a pull for the truth.
  - He at first still didn't embrace his Christian upbringing and fell into Manichaeism which didn't see the Bible as Scripture and questioned the origins of evil.
- Augustine meets Ambrose
  - After various failures and being unsatisfied with finding answers to his questions of life and God he found himself in Milan hearing the sermons of Ambrose.
  - He was shown the writings of the Neoplatonist's which was a study of philosophy with religious overtones, which caught the mind of Augustine.
  - Some of his questions of evil and God were being answered from a philosopher's perspective.
  - When he sought Ambrose initially it wasn't to become a Christian but to hear how he spoke.
    - Since Augustine was a rhetorician he sought to hear Ambrose as he was well known for his preaching and speaking.
    - In time Augustine began to actually listen to what Ambrose was preaching, his message about Christ.
  - He also learned from Ambrose that to help with difficult passages from the Old Testament he could look upon them allegorically.
  - This was to look at passages not so much in the literal sense but to find the deeper hidden meaning within (spiritual). He defined it as a mode of speech used to define another (similar to a parable).

- This was of course disputed among other groups of Christians who would accept nothing but literal interpretation.
- However, he still struggled with giving up his "career" and turning completely to faith.
- Augustine however realized that there were no longer any intellectual difficulties with Christianity.
  - He had early on looked upon Christianity as something that couldn't be rationalized and that someone who was learned could see through.
  - However, upon closer examination he began to realize the truth of the message of the gospel and that it was quite intellectually edifying.
- Augustine's conversion
  - But his conversion came one day when in despair over what to do he was in the garden where children were playing and he presumably heard one of the kids say "Take up and read. Take up and read". Contemplating this he returned to a manuscript he had previously laid down and immediately cast his eyes upon the words of Paul
    - Romans 13:13-14
      - "Let us walk with decency, as in the daylight: not in carousing and drunkenness; not in sexual impurity and promiscuity; not in quarreling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no plans to satisfy the fleshly desires."
      - This passage opened his eyes and he became a Christian.
  - He then took the next step of baptism which was done by Ambrose.
- Augustine traveled to Cassiciacum to begin his Christian journey
  - After his conversion, he traveled to Cassiciacum in North Africa.
  - His intention was to spend the rest of his days in a monastic retreat.
  - Upon arrival though he opted instead to lead a life without unnecessary comforts and focus on prayer, study and meditation as opposed to living in the desert as a true monk.
  - Here he wrote his first Christian works, though they still bore the mark of the elements in Neoplatonism which had a heavy influence of philosophy.
  - His intention now was to dedicate his life to philosophy, however that soon changed.
- Augustine became the bishop of Hippo
  - In 391 he visited the town of Hippo where he visited a church under the bishop of Valerius.
  - At this time Augustine's reputation preceded him and the bishop and church were well aware of his writings.
  - The congregation and bishop Valerius, ordained him to serve in the church.
  - Then 4 years later he was made a co-bishop with Valerius as he did not want to lose him and hoped he would take his place one day.
  - That day came a short time later with the passing of Valerius and Augustine became the official bishop of Hippo.
- Augustine's new focus on being a pastor and theologian.
  - With his new responsibilities, he put his thoughts and efforts into his writings of theology.
  - He eventually became the most influential theologian in the entire Latin-speaking church.
  - His influence included:
    - Freedom of the will – That we have a free will to make decisions.
    - He fought against various heresies like Donatism, Manichaeism and Pelagianism.

- The origin of evil
      - To Augustine he addressed this by stating that man has a free will that is inherently good.
      - But the free will is capable of making decisions both good and those that produce evil.
      - So evil is found in the bad decisions made by human and angelic wills.
      - He confirmed the reality of evil and the good God.
    - Just War Theory
      - That Christians could go to war under the right circumstances.
    - Irresistible Grace and predestination (Calvinistic doctrine)
      - Conversion is divine and not human as God gives it to those He has chosen or predestined.
      - The beginning of faith is in God's action rather than in a human decision.
      - That one cannot resist God's grace.
- As time went on he wrote many of his books that are still treasured this day among many different denominations of Christians.
  - The City of God being his greatest work, which was written after the fall of Rome in 410 to the Goths.
    - He was responding to allegations from the people that Rome fell because it turned from its pagan gods to Jesus Christ.
    - Augustine made it clear that there are 2 cities, one the heavenly city of God which is truth and will last forever in contrast with the earthly cities which are temporary. That when an earthly city is built for the love of man it will fall.
  - Confessions
    - A spiritual autobiography addressed in a prayer to God.
    - Shows his long and painful path to becoming a Christian.
- Upon his death Augustine was the last of the great leaders of the Imperial church in the West.
- He died when the Vandals were at the gates of Hippo announcing a new age.
- Augustine however became the most influential theologian both in the Roman Catholic church and also to the reformers during the protestant reformation (although for different reasons).



## The End of an Era

- In 410 when the Goths took Rome and shortly after the Vandals took Northern Africa, we have the end of an era of the Roman Empire in the West.
- Landscape by the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century



- The Roman empire had been split into two sides the West and the East. The West fell but the East stood for another 1000 years.
- The imperial church (created by Constantine) would continue to stand in the East which was known as the Byzantine Empire.
- The invaders in the West were pagans which brought a new wave of unbelievers, however amazingly over time the invaders accepted the Christian faith because of thousands of unknown witnesses of the Gospel message.
- This leads us into the Middle Ages.