

**CHURCH HISTORY  
MINISTRY TRAINING ACADEMY**

COMMONWEALTH ACADEMY  
NOVEMBER 2013



## WHY STUDY CHURCH HISTORY?

- Confront our prejudices
- Avoid Mistakes of history
- “Stand on the shoulders of giants” for greater ecclesiastical discernment
- “Choose whether to consciously understand how our traditions have shaped us or to let those traditions shape us unconsciously”
- 1st Peter 4:12-16. Take comfort in fellowship
- Hebrews 13:7-8



## CHURCH HISTORY OVERVIEW

- Early Church
  - Early Church Life
  - Early Church Doctrine
  - Early Church Decline
- Medieval Church
  - Early Middle Ages/  
Dark Ages
  - Middle Ages
  - High Middle Ages
- The Reformation
  - Luther to Calvin
  - Radical Reformation
  - The Age of Reason
  - Enlightenment &  
Awakening
- The Restoration Movement
  - Stone Campbell Roots
  - Our Movement(s)



## EARLY CHURCH OVERVIEW

- Why study the Church Fathers
- Who's Who
- New Testament Canon
- Early Church Life
- Early Church Doctrine
- Early Church Decline: What went wrong?



# CHURCH FATHERS

*THE ANTE-NICENE FATHERS, A WHO'S WHO FROM  
80AD TO 325AD*



## WHY STUDY THE EARLY CHURCH?

1. Many of the main Early Church writers were direct disciples of the Apostles
2. They lived in the same culture, spoke the same language, and maintained unity on essentials
3. Despite persecution, they did not compromise doctrine
4. Despite living in a compromised world, they did not compromise holiness
5. They were attacked by heretics and successfully defended the faith



What The Church Fathers Wrote - Though Inspiring - Is Not  
Inspired!

*(A Word of Caution)*







## POLYCARP



- c. 69-155
- Commended Bishop of the Church at Smyrna (Revelation 2)
- A Disciple of the Apostle John
- Friend of Ignatius
- Disciple of Irenaeus
- Arrested at a very old age and burned to death ("Martyrdom of Polycarp")



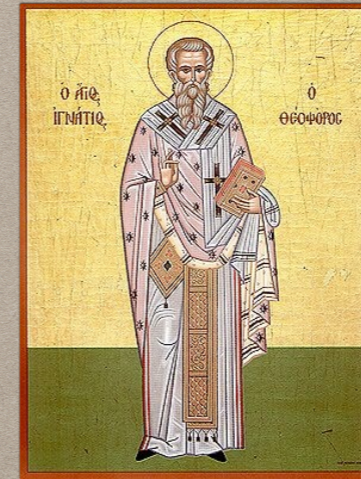
185 AD Irenaeus. “For I have a more vivid recollection of what occurred at that time than of recent events ...; so that I can even describe the place where the blessed Polycarp used to sit and discourse — his going out, too, and his coming in — his general mode of life and personal appearance, together with the discourses which he delivered to the people; also how he would speak of his familiar intercourse with John, and with the rest of those who had seen the Lord; and how he would call their words to remembrance. Whatsoever things he had heard from them respecting the Lord, both with regard to His miracles and His teaching, Polycarp having thus received [information] from the eye-witnesses of the Word of life, would recount them all in harmony with the Scriptures.”

## MARTYRDOM OF POLYCARP



## IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

- c. 50-117
- Torn to pieces by wild beasts in the Colosseum
- Defended the Faith against the Docetists
- A Disciple of the Apostle John
- "It is necessary, therefore, to not only be called by the name Christian but to actually be a Christian.... If we are not ready to die in the same manner of his suffering, his life is not in us."
- "Bring on the fire and the cross. Bring on the packs of wild beasts. Let there be the breaking and dislocating of my bones and severing of my limbs. Bring on the mutilation of my whole body. ...Only let me attain to Jesus Christ!" Shortly after this writing, he was martyred.



## CLEMENT OF ROME

- First Century
- Bishop of the Church of Rome
- May have been a companion of Peter and Paul (Phil. 4:3)
- Wrote a letter to the Corinthian Church on behalf of the Roman Church in aid to leaders who were ousted by a minority faction (95AD)
- Martyred by drowning



## JUSTIN MARTYR

- c. 100-165
- Philosopher who converted to Christianity and became a tireless Evangelist and Apologist
- Native of Samaria, spent later years in Rome
- Beheaded in Rome
- "You can kill us, but not hurt us."



There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, both righteous and beloved by God, who spoke by the Divine Spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth to men, neither reverencing nor fearing any man, not influenced by a desire for glory, but speaking those things alone which they saw and which they heard, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their writings are still extant, and he who has read them is very much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things, and of those matters which the philosopher ought to know, provided he has believed them. For they did not use demonstration in their treatises, seeing that they were witnesses to the truth above all demonstration, and worthy of belief; and those events which have happened, and those which are happening, compel you to assent to the utterances made by them, although, indeed, they were entitled to credit on account of the miracles which they performed, since they both glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things, and proclaimed His Son, the Christ [sent] by Him: which, indeed, the false

## CLEMENT OF ALEXANDRIA



- c. 150-215
- Learned Christian Teacher at Alexandria, Egypt, who was in charge of the catechetical school there
- Origen was one of his students
- He refuted the Gnostics in his largest extant work, Miscellanies



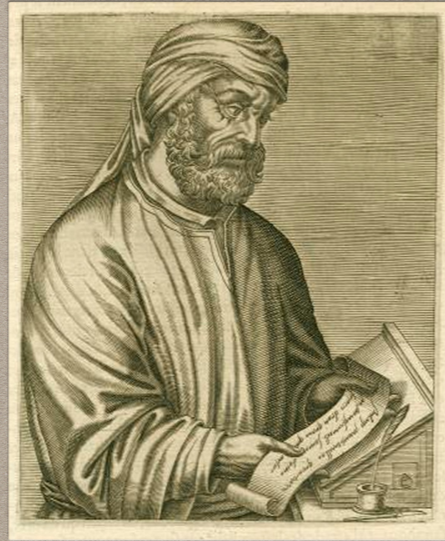
## IRENEAUS



- c. 130-200
- Bishop of the Church of Lyons (in modern day France)
- A personal disciple of Polycarp while he was in Smyrna
- "The Crucial Human Link to the Apostles"
- When the overseer of the church in Lyons was killed in persecution, Irenaeus was named his successor. The entire early church spoke well of Irenaeus



## TERTULLIAN



- c. 160-230
- Fiery Christian writer in Carthage, North Africa
- Wrote numerous apologies, works against heretics, and exhortations to other Christians.
- Later in his life (212 AD), he joined the Montanist sect, which expected its members to follow man made aesthetic commands. Watch out for quotes from him after 212AD.
- "The leg does not feel the chain when the mind is in heaven"
- "The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."



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He may have been an ordained presbyter

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"The blood of martyrs is the seed of the church."



## CYPRIAN



- d. 258 AD
- Bishop of the Church of Carthage, North Africa during a time of fierce persecution
- He was a wealthy Roman citizen who converted around the age of 40. He liquidated his vast estate and gave the money to the poor. He rejoiced to be so unfettered in his Christian new life
- Arrested and beheaded by the Romans after working underground for much of his ministry



## ORIGEN

- c. 185-255 AD
- A gifted student of Clement in Alexandria
- At only 18, the elders appointed him to succeed Clement as head of the Alexandria school; he flourished
- He wrote the first Bible commentary
- At 70, he was caught and tortured; however, no amount of torture could ever make him deny Jesus. Those wounds eventually killed him.



Born to Christian parents near Alexandria, Origen was the oldest of seven children. He was taught the faith by his father Leonides, who was martyred in 202. His mother hiding his clothes prevented 17-year-old Origen from rushing out to die alongside Leonides.

To help support his family, Origen opened a grammar school and began to teach those training for the ministry. He studied under a pagan philosopher, so as to better understand the arguments against Christianity.

As his school exploded in growth, Origen noticed a desire to better understand Scripture by himself and others. Fueled by this passion, Origen worked for 20 years on the massive Hexapla, a six-column text that contained the Hebrew Bible and five Greek interpretations.

# NEW TESTAMENT CANON

*THE PATRISTICS GUARD THE GOSPEL 151-367AD*



## DEVELOPMENT OF THE CANON

- Muratorian Canon (170 A.D. ): Perhaps the oldest known list of the books of the New Testament - a response to Marcion's heresy
- By the start of the 3rd century, only a handful of books are disputed
- In the early 4th century Eusebius made a list: Only James, 2 Peter, 3 John and Jude are disputed
- The first complete list of books as we have them today came in 367 by bishop Athanasius of Alexandria



The Muratorian fragment is a copy of perhaps the oldest known list of the books of the New Testament. The fragment, consisting of 85 lines, is a 7th-century Latin manuscript bound in a 7th or 8th century codex from the library of Columban's monastery at Bobbio; it contains internal cues suggesting it is a translation from a Greek original written about 170 or as late as the 4th century. Both the degraded condition of the manuscript and the poor Latin in which it was written have made it difficult to translate. The beginning of the fragment is missing, and it ends abruptly. The fragment consists of all that remains of a section of a list of all the works that were accepted as canonical by the churches known to its anonymous original compiler. It was discovered in the Ambrosian Library in Milan by Father Ludovico Antonio Muratori (1672–1750), the most famous Italian historian of his generation, and published in 1740.

The following translation usually follows the amended text edited by Hans Lietzmann, *Das Muratorische Fragment*

## TEST FOR NT CANONICITY

- The main test of canonicity was the apostolicity of the book:
- When a writing was held to come directly from a disciple of Christ, to arise from the circle or direct influence of one chosen personally by Jesus
- Or a writing that expresses in a pure form, the apostles' message about Christ
- "These are the words that changed our hearts"



# EARLY CHURCH LIFE

*WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY...*



## LIFE & DOCTRINE



“Be conscientious about how you live and what you teach. Persevere in this, because by doing so you will save both yourself and those who listen to you.” - I Timothy 4.16



## **MONEY/MAMMON/MATERIALISM**

### **WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS**

- "Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare... For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness." - I Timothy 6.8-10
- "Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have". - Hebrew 13.5
- "No one can serve two masters... You cannot serve God and Mammon." - Matthew 6.24





**MONEY/MAMMON/MATERIALISM  
WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS**



“Let us not interpret 'covetousness' as consisting merely in the lust of what is another's. For even what seems ours is another's. For nothing is ours, since all things are God's, to whom we ourselves belong.”

–Tertullian



"How will we make friends with mammon, if we love it so much as not to put up with its loss? We will perish together with the lost mammon"

*-Tertullian*



“Rich men - attached to their means - have been accustomed to gaze more upon their gold than upon heaven. In contrast, our sort of people [i.e., Christians] - though poor - have both discovered wisdom and have delivered their teaching to others.”

–Mark Felix



"That many of us are called poor, this is not our disgrace, but our glory.  
As our mind is relaxed by luxury, it is strengthened by poverty."

*–Mark Felix*



**MONEY/MAMMON/MATERIALISM  
WHAT ABOUT US?**



How “set apart” from the world are we on the issue of materialism?

When people look at us, do they see a difference?

Do we live below our means and are we being sacrificial?



“For Christians are not differentiated from other people by country, language, or customs; you see, they do not live in cities of their own, or speak some strange dialect, or have some peculiar lifestyle... They live in both Greek and foreign cities, wherever chance has put them. They follow local customs in clothing, food, and other aspects of life. But at the same time, they demonstrate to us the wonderful and certainly unusual form of their own citizenship...” - Letter to Diognetus

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- *Letter of Mathetes to Diognetus*



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"They marry and have children just like everyone else, but they do not kill unwanted babies. They offer a shared table but not a shared bed. They are at present 'in the flesh' but they do not live 'according to the flesh.' They are passing their days on earth but are citizens of heaven. They obey the appointed laws and go beyond the laws in their own lives."

- *Letter of Mathetes to Diognetus*



## ENTERTAINMENT WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- I Peter 1.13-15
- I Peter 4.4
- Romans 12:2.



“Therefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, ...not conforming yourselves to the former lusts, as in your ignorance; but as He who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct” - I Peter 1.13-15

“In regard to these, they think it strange that you do not run with them in the same flood of dissipation, speaking evil of you.” - I Peter 4.4

“Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” -Romans 12:2.

**ENTERTAINMENT  
WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS**



"We renounce all your spectacles... Among us nothing is ever said, seen, or heard that has anything in common with the madness of the circus, the immodesty of the theatre, the atrocities of the arena, or the useless exercise of the wrestling ground. Why do you take offense at us because we differ from you in regard to your pleasures?"

-TERTULLIAN



"The father who carefully protects and guards his virgin daughter's ears from every polluting word takes her to the theatre himself, exposing her to all its vile language and attitudes... How can it be right to look at the things that are wrong to do? How can those things which defile a man when they go out of his mouth not defile him when going in through his eyes and ears?"

-TERTULLIAN



**ENTERTAINMENT  
WHAT ABOUT US?**



Are we tolerating entertainment containing strong sexual/violent/criminal content (movie, T.V., music, video games) ?

Garbage in = Garbage out: What we hear and see does affect us

Do we have integrity? (Example: Illegal downloading or copying...)

## PERSECUTION WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- John 15:20
- Matthew 5.11
- 1 Peter 4:12-16
- Hebrews 3:7-8



john 15:20

“Blessed are you when people insult and persecute you and say all kinds of evil things about you...” - Matthew 5.11

## PERSECUTION THE EARLY CHURCH



By living according to the teachings of Jesus, the Christians were condemning the pagan way of life  
People were slandering the Christians, making up false accusations: sexual sins, cannibalism, unpatriotic, etc.  
Refusal to make Caesar lord. Only Jesus is Lord!



“At last she [Blandina] was sacrificed, but the pagans themselves confessed that never had any woman suffered so much and so intensely.” - The Martyrs of Lyon



**PERSECUTION  
WHAT ABOUT US?**



How do we feel about persecution? Do we think it is a curse?  
But Jesus promises it will happen if we hold on to his teachings!

# EARLY CHURCH DOCTRINE

*WATCH YOUR LIFE AND DOCTRINE CLOSELY...*



## BAPTISM

### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- "Peter said to them, 'Repent, and each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.'" - Acts 2.38
- "In the ark a few, that is eight souls, were delivered through water. And this prefigured baptism, which now saves you..." - I Peter 3.20b-3.21a
- "The one who believes and is baptized will be saved, but the one who does not believe will be condemned." - Mark 16.16



## BAPTISM WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS

- "If any man does not receive baptism, he does not have salvation." - Cyril of Jerusalem



## BAPTISM

### WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS

"Those who are convinced that what we teach is true and who desire to live accordingly are instructed to fast and pray to God for the remission of all their past sins. We also pray and fast with them. Then we bring them to a place where there is water, and they are regenerated in the same manner in which we ourselves were regenerated. They then receive the washing with water in the name of God... and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christ said, 'Unless you are born again, you shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.'" - Justin Martyr, First Apology



110 AD Ignatius of Antioch "Let none of you turn deserter. Let your baptism be your armor; your faith, your helmet; your love, your spear; your patient endurance, your panoply" (Letter to Polycarp 6).

110-165 AD Martyr "As many as are persuaded and believe that what we teach and say is true, and undertake to be able to live accordingly, are instructed to pray and to entreat God with fasting, for the remission of their sins that are past, we praying and fasting with them. Then they are brought by us where there is water, and are regenerated in the same manner in which we were ourselves regenerated. For, in the name of God, the Father and Lord of the universe, and of our Savior Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Spirit, they then receive the washing with water. For Christ also said, 'Except ye be born again, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven.' Now, that it is impossible for those who have once been born to enter into their mothers' wombs, is manifest to all... And for this we have learned from the apostles this reason. Since at our birth we were born without our own knowledge or choice, by our parents coming together, and were brought up in bad habits and wicked training; in order that we may not remain

## GRACE&WORKS WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

### Grace

- “Even when we were dead in trespasses, [God] made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved).” - Ephesians 2.5
- “By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God.” - Ephesians 2.8
- “...he saved us not by works of righteousness that we have done but on the basis of his mercy, through the washing of the new birth and the renewing of the Holy Spirit...” - Titus 3.5



## GRACE&WORKS

### WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

#### Work

- "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone claims to have faith but does not have works? Can this kind of faith save him?" - James 2.14
- "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven." - Matthew 7.21





## GRACE&WORKS

### WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS

- "Being convinced at that time of our unworthiness of attaining life through our own works, it is now, through the kindness of God, graciously given to us. Accordingly, it is clear that in ourselves we were unable to enter into the kingdom of God. However, through the power of God, we can be made able." - Letter to Diognetus
- "[We] are not justified by ourselves. Nor by our own wisdom, understanding, godliness, or works done in holiness of heart. But by that faith through which Almighty God has justified all men since the beginning." - Clement of Rome



30-100 AD Clement of Rome, who was a, wrote, "It is necessary, therefore, that we be prompt in the practice of good works. For He forewarns us, 'Behold, the Lord comes and His reward is before His face, to render to every man according to his work.' ... Let us therefore earnestly strive to be found in the number of those who wait for Him, in order that we may share in His promised reward. But how, beloved ones, shall we do this? By fixing our thoughts on God by faith. By earnestly seeking the things that are pleasing and acceptable to Him. By doing the things that are in harmony with His blameless will. And by following the way of truth, casting away from us all unrighteousness and sin." (Clement of Rome Letter to the Corinthians chaps. 34, 35 [companion of the apostle Paul and overseer of the church in Rome])

69-156 AD Polycarp "He who raised Him up from the dead will also raise us up-if we do His will and walk in His commandments and love what He loved, keeping ourselves from all unrighteousness." (Polycarp, personal companion of the apostle John, Letter to the Philippians chap. 2)

## GRACE&WORKS

### WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS

#### Works

- "Only those who fear the Lord and keep His commandments have life with God; but as for those who do not keep His commandments, there is no life in them." - Hermas
- "The tree is made manifest by its fruit. So those who profess themselves to be Christians will be recognized by their conduct." - Ignatius
- "He who does not believe God is cheated of his own hope. And he does not believe God, who does not do what God has commanded." - Clement of Alexandria



## PREDESTINATION&FREE WILL WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS

- “[God] 'will render to each one according to his deeds'; eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honour, and immortality; but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness - indignation and wrath.” - Romans 2.6-7
- “The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance.” - 2 Peter 3.9



## PREDESTINATION&FREE WILL WHAT THE EARLY CHURCH SAYS

"A man by himself working and toiling at freedom from passion achieves nothing. But if he plainly show himself very desirous and earnest about this, he attains it by the addition of the power of God. For God conspires with willing souls. But if they abandon their eagerness, the Spirit who is bestowed by God is also restrained. For to save the unwilling is the part of one exercising compulsion. But to save the willing is that of one showing grace." - Clement of Alexandria



195 AD Clement of Alexandria "Thus God ministers eternal salvation to those who cooperate for the attainment of knowledge and good conduct. Since what the Commandments direct are in our own power, along with the performance of them, the promise is accomplished." (ANF 2.536)

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## WHAT HAPPENED TO EARLY CHRISTIANITY??



## **ENTRUST TO RELIABLE MEN...**

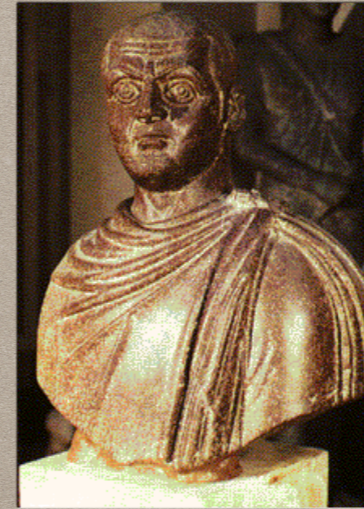
### **-2ND TIMOTHY 2:2**

- Christianity was a treasure that the Apostles entrusted to reliable, Spirit-filled men of great integrity.
- This treasure remained safeguarded for nearly 300 years by four towering walls of protection:
  1. An ultra conservative spirit that equated change with error;
  2. Separation from the world and its changing whims;
  3. Voluntary practice of referring questions to elders in churches where the Apostles had taught; and
  4. Independence of each congregation, making it difficult for any erroneous teachings to spread quickly through the church



## THE LAST GREAT PERSECUTION

- 303 AD
- Under Diocletian and Caesar Galarius
- Most devastating persecution due to its severity, duration, and the condition of the church (it came after a 40 year lull during which the church grew lax)



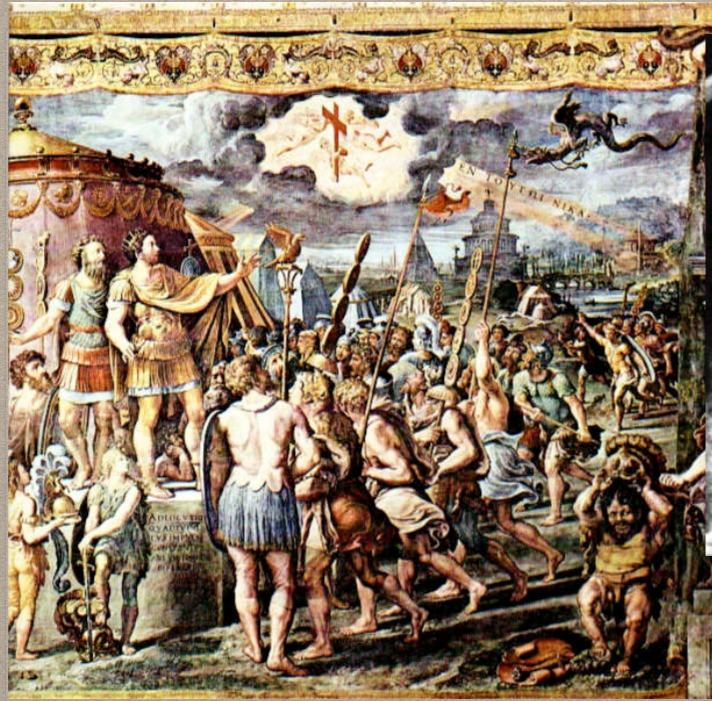
In 304, with Diocletian ill in Rome, Galerius seized his chance and imposed a universal obligation to sacrifice on pain of death. Up to then only the clergy had been involved directly; now the pressure was on every Christian. The number of martyrs increased, as did the defiance of the Christians. One inscription from a North African church lists 34 men and women who "suffered under the laws of the divine emperors Diocletian and Maximian." In Phrygia a whole community was wiped out, and Egypt saw eight years of ruthless repression, which among the Coptic Christians earned the reign of Diocletian the title "The era of the martyrs."

Persecution in the Early Church: Christian History, Issue 27, (Carol Stream, IL: Christianity Today, Inc.) 1997.

Christians had always been subject to local discrimination in the empire, but early emperors were reluctant to issue general laws against them. It was not until the 250s, under the reigns of Decius and Valerian, that such laws were passed. Under this legislation, Christians were compelled to sacrifice to Roman gods or face imprisonment and execution.<sup>[3]</sup> When Gallienus acceded in 260, he issued the first imperial edict regarding tolerance toward Christians,<sup>[4]</sup> leading to nearly 40 years of peaceful coexistence. Diocletian's accession in 284 did not mark an immediate reversal of disregard to Christianity, but it did herald a gradual shift in official attitudes toward religious minorities. In the first fifteen years of his rule, Diocletian purged the army of Christians, condemned Manicheans to death, and surrounded himself with public opponents of Christianity. Diocletian's preference for activist government, combined with his self-image as a restorer of past Roman glory, presaged the most pervasive persecution in Roman history. In the winter of 302, Galerius urged Diocletian to begin a general persecution of the Christians. Diocletian was wary, and asked the oracle of Apollo for guidance. The oracle's reply was read as an endorsement of Galerius's position, and a general persecution was called on February 24, 303.

Persecutory policies varied in intensity across the empire. Where Galerius and Diocletian were avid persecutors, Constantius was unenthusiastic. Later persecutory edicts, including the calls for universal sacrifice, were not applied in his domain. His son, Constantine, on taking the imperial office in 306, restored Christians to full legal equality and returned property that had been confiscated during the persecution. In Italy in 306, the usurper Maxentius ousted Maximian's successor Severus, promising full religious toleration. Galerius ended the persecution in the East in 311, but it was resumed in Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor by his successor, Maximinus. Constantine and Licinius, Severus's successor, signed the "Edict of Milan" in 313, which offered a more comprehensive acceptance of Christianity than Galerius's edict had provided. Licinius ousted Maximinus in 313, bringing an end to persecution in the East.

The persecution failed to check the rise of the church. By 324, Constantine was sole ruler of the empire, and Christianity had become his favored religion. Although the persecution resulted in the deaths of—according to one modern estimate—3,000 to 3,500 Christians, and the torture, imprisonment, or dislocation of many more, most Christians avoided punishment. The persecution did, however, cause many churches to split between those who had complied with imperial authority (the traditores), and those who had remained "pure". Certain schisms, like those of the Donatists in North Africa and the Meletians in Egypt, persisted long after the persecutions. The Donatists would not be reconciled to the Catholic Church until after 411. In the centuries that followed, some Christians created a "cult of the martyrs", and exaggerated the barbarity of the persecutory era. These accounts were criticized during the Enlightenment and after, most notably by Edward Gibbon. Modern historians like G. E. M. de Ste. Croix have attempted to determine whether Christian sources exaggerated the scope of the Diocletianic persecution.

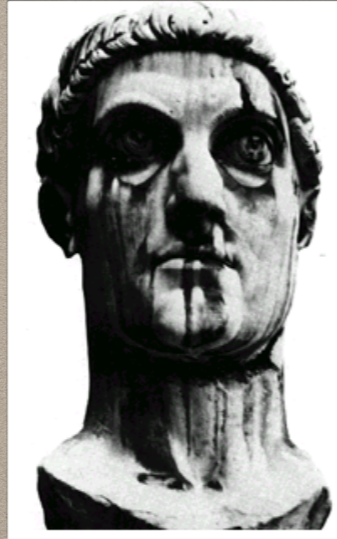


"IN HOC SIGNO VINCES"





## CONTROVERSIAL CONSTANTINE



- A rival leader, Maxentius, ruled parts of the western Empire. Constantine, a born leader, mobilized his forces and marched toward Rome to confront Maxentius. Along the way, he experienced the “by this conquer” vision.
- In AD 306, several rivals shared the ruling power of the Roman Empire; Constantine ruled Britain and Gaul
- As a result, he conquered and issued the Edict of Milan in 313 AD.



## A KNIGHT IN SHINING ARMOR?

Just when all seemed so dark for the Church.... A heroic figure appeared to sweep the Church off her feet....



**SATAN'S TACTICS  
30AD TO 300AD**



30 AD - 311 AD



312 AD - ?



## ARIUS VS. ALEXANDER



Arius

Homoiousios

"A similar substance"

VS



Alexander  
Homoousios  
"The same  
substance"

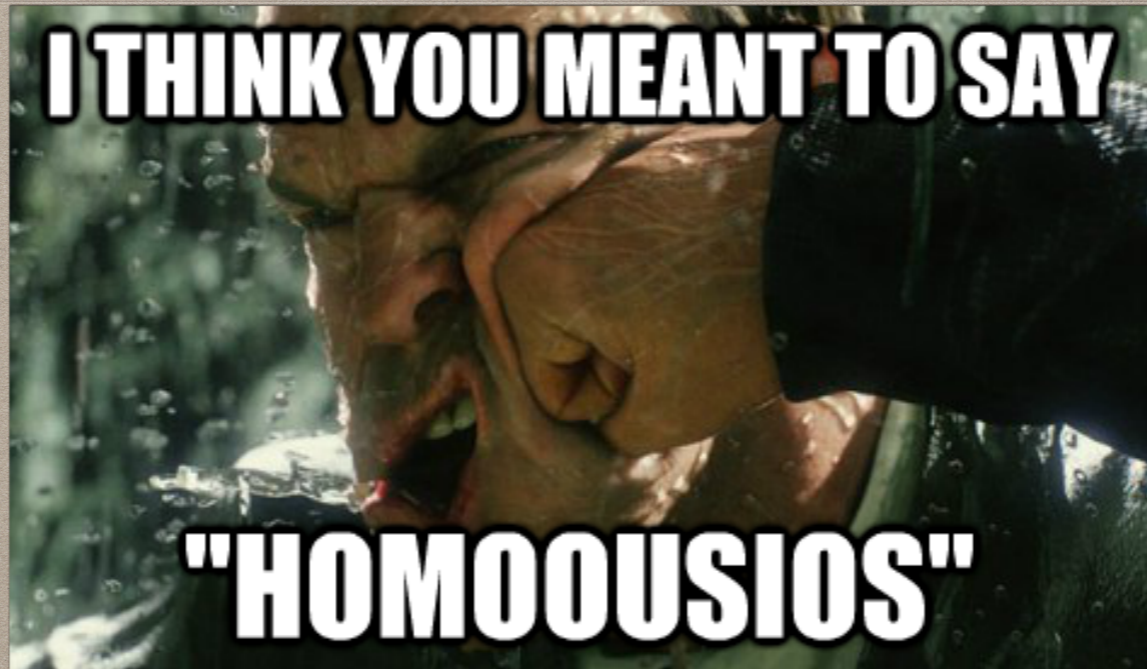


## COUNCIL OF NICEA 325AD

- Constantine called a council in Nicea
- About 300 bishops answered the call
- The teachings of Arius were condemned
- The first time the emperor played such a significant role in the affairs of the church









# HERETICS

PUNCHING THEM WON'T STOP PEOPLE FROM BELIEVING THEIR LIES, BUT IT FEELS SO GOOD.



## WALLS BEGIN TO CRUMBLE

"On account of the abundant freedom [granted by the government], we fell into laziness and sloth. We envied and reviled each other, and were almost, as it were, taking up arms against one another, forming parties against people."

- Eusebius, 4th Century Church Historian



## THE WALL OF APOSTOLIC CONSERVATISM

"It must seem to all who duly regard these facts that a new and fresh era of existence had begun to dawn from the midst of darkness on the human race. And all must confess that these things were entirely the work of God, who raised up this pious emperor to withstand the multitude of the ungodly." - Eusebius

- Hag. 2:9 "The glory of this latter temple shall be greater than the former."



## THE WALL OF HOLINESS

- The world for once wanted a friendship with the church, and the church reciprocated
- Christianity, now socially rewarding, only meant mental assent to certain doctrines and rites rather than a changed life.
- The Church, no longer turning the other cheek to persecutors, became the persecutor
- Feasts, Architecture, and Relics delivered growth



## THE WALL OF GODLY ADVICE AND THE WALL OF CONGREGATIONAL INDEPENDENCE

- The Council of Nicaea 325 AD (homousios vs. homoousios)
- Christianity Mandate 381 AD
- The Council of Ephesus 431 AD (Theotokos)



Explain council procedures without going into detail about subtleties of the debate. Bottomline: Constantine really presided.

## AUGUSTINE'S INFLUENCE



- 380AD -
- The most influential Christian of all time
- The father of Western Theology
- Formally a teacher of persuasive argumentation and writing
- Never could master Greek



## BRILLIANT, BUT MISGUIDED



"Again I ask if good and holy men never inflict persecution on anyone, but only suffer it...? ... there is a persecution of unrighteousness, which the unholy inflict upon the church of Christ, and there is a righteous persecution which the church of Christ inflicts upon the unholy. Moreover, the church persecutes in the spirit of love..."

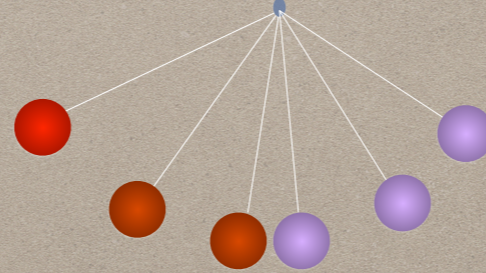


## SOME OF WHAT HE TAUGHT

- That Mary was born and lived her entire life without actual sin;
- That unbaptized infants are eternally damned;
- That sex within marriage is an inherently debased act;
- That war can be holy;
- That there is no forgiveness of sins outside the Catholic church;
- That some of the practices and teachings of the apostles no longer apply;
- That there is a purgatorial fire;
- That the dead can benefit from the sacrifice of the Eucharist.



## NEWTON'S LAW



- For every action there is an equal and opposite reaction.
- Applies to theology as much as it does to physics





## LESSONS FOR US TO HEED

- Holiness
- Doctrine
- Tradition
- Love of most will grow cold....
- Matthew 24:9-14
- Hebrews 2:1 "We must pay more careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away."
- Revelation 2 and 3



Preach on this! We need to be sobered. We need to be vigilant. We need to watch out for one another.



An important function of the Forum, during both Republican and Imperial times, was to serve as the culminating venue for the celebratory military processions known as Triumphs. Victorious generals entered the city by the western Triumphal Gate (Porta Triumphalis) and circumnavigated the Palatine Hill (counterclockwise) before proceeding from the Velian Hill down the Via Sacra and into the Forum

"The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful."

*-Jesus*

