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# CHURCH HISTORY

Early Persecution, Church Growth and  
Denominationalism, and Christian Revivals

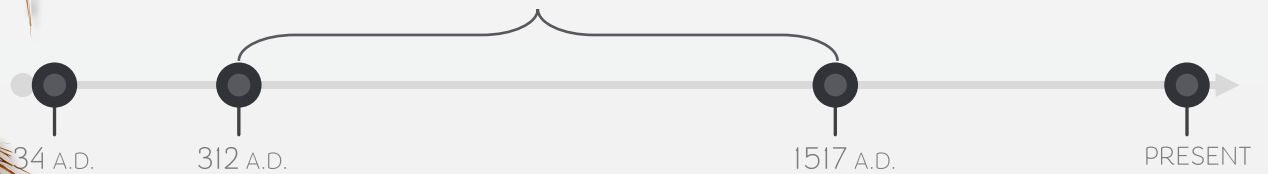
Presentation by  
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Part 2

# CHURCH GROWTH & DENOMINATIONALISM

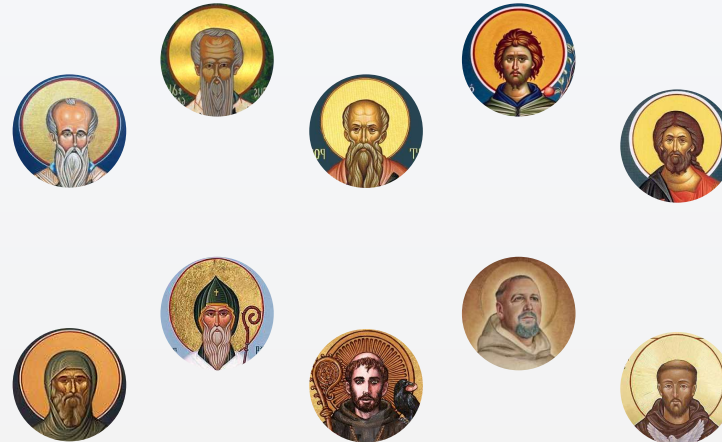


# CONTENT

Under Part 2, “Church Growth and Denominationalism”, the following topics will be discussed.

## 1. The Beginnings to Constantine

- Organization of the Early Church
  - Christian Tradition
  - Leadership
  - Christian Beliefs



## 2. Constantine to Middle Age

- Constantine the Great
- Growth of the Early Church

## 3. Middle Age to Pre-Reformation

- Main Doctrinal Controversies in Church History
- The Great Schism of 1054

# PART 2a – The Beginnings to Constantine

## Organization of the Early Church – Christian Tradition

- **At first, Christians worshipped alongside Jewish believers (Jewish Christianity) in the Synagogues** (see evidence of this in Acts 17:1-5; 18:1-3).
- **The loose organization of the Early Church resulted in lots of differences in interpretation of Christian beliefs and practices.**
  - Including the churches in Rome, Thessalonica, Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus, Colossae, and Antioch, there were churches outside the Roman Empire.
- **It is necessary to discuss the Catholic Church because it is the earliest recognizable Christian leadership structure from which all other denominations were derived.**
- **The leaders of the Catholic Church often drew on their link to Christ (through Apostle Peter) to legitimize their right to leadership over the Church.**
- **The origins of the Catholic Church:**
  - According to Catholic tradition, the Catholic Church was founded by Jesus Christ, which leadership Christ conferred to Peter
  - **“And I say unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock, I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.”** (Matthew 16:18).

# PART 2a – The Beginnings to Constantine

## Organization of the Early Church – Leadership

45 –  
95 AD

The Apostles  
are the Leaders

The Church is under the leadership of the Apostles (Galatians 2:9), and they buttress the teachings of Christ through their letters (epistles).

60 AD

The Apostles  
are the Leaders

Peter, **the first Bishop of Rome**.  
Although it is not definite that he held the title, evidence indicates that Early Christians looked to Peter as having the authority of the Bishop over the Early Church.

67 –  
76 AD

The Apostles are  
the Leaders

Peter consecrated Linus (II Timothy 4:21) as Bishop of Rome after him, thus, beginning the line of leadership that leads to the current pontiff (Pope Francis).

99 AD

The Apostles  
are the Leaders

Death of the last apostle (John the Beloved) at Ephesus.

100 AD

Era of  
Apostolic Fathers

Over 40 Christian communities are established in areas such as Armenia, Iran, India.  
The Church was loosely organized which resulted in diverse interpretation of Christian beliefs.

2<sup>nd</sup> C.  
AD

Era of  
Apostolic Fathers

A hierarchy is developed with a central bishop having authority over the clergy in his city.  
This led to a structure in which bishops of politically important cities exerted greater authority.

# PART 2a – The Beginnings to Constantine

## Organization of the Early Church – Leadership

Bishops of the churches in Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome held the highest authority.

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. bishops would gather to settle policy and doctrinal issues.

# 1<sup>st</sup> to 2<sup>nd</sup> Century —The Apostolic Fathers

75 – 150/200 AD



- Although there is some debate about the timeline, the Apostolic Fathers are the group of Christian leaders who lived roughly from 75 to 200 AD.
- Church historians have accorded the name “Fathers” to the pastors, leaders, and earliest figures of the early Church.



**CLEMENT OF ROME**

35 – 99 AD

- The 4<sup>th</sup> bishop of Rome (88 – 99 AD) and consecrated by Apostle Peter.
- A direct disciple of Apostle Paul (Phil. 4:3).
- Outside the NT, his 1<sup>st</sup> epistle is considered the oldest.



**IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH**

died 108/140 AD

- Bishop of Antioch.
- Said to have known Apostle John directly.
- En route to his execution (in Rome), he wrote letters that are preserved as examples of Early Church theology.



**POLYCARP OF SMYRNA**

69 – 155 AD

- A disciple of John and instructed by the apostles.
- Had the most direct contact with those who had seen Jesus.



**PAPIAS OF HIERAPOLIS**

60 – 130 AD

- Bishop of Hierapolis (now Pamukkale in Turkey) around the time of Ignatius of Rome.
- A hearer of John teachings and a companion of Polycarp.



**QUADRATUS OF ATHENS**

1<sup>st</sup> c. – 129 AD

- A disciple of the apostles.
- Appointed as Bishop of Athens after the death of his predecessor (Publius).

# PART 2a – The Beginnings to Constantine

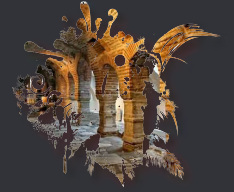
## Organization of the Early Church – Formation Christian Beliefs

- One of the earliest doctrinal disputes in the Early Church was about the place of the Mosaic Law in Christian traditions.
- Around 50 AD – **During the Council of Jerusalem (recorded in Acts ch. 15), it was decided that Gentiles could be Christians without having to adopt all the laws of Moses (Acts 15:23-29).**
  - As more Gentiles were converted, Christianity drifted away from Jewish practices and began to establish itself as a separate religion.
  - At this point, tensions began to cause starker differences between Christians and Jewish believers; this came to head when Christians refused to join the 3<sup>rd</sup> Jewish Revolt (the Bar Kokhba Revolt) in 132 AD.
- **The writings of the Apostolic Fathers give an insight to the theology of the Early Church and the formation of Christian practices.**
- 325 AD – **The Council of Nicea.** Christian leaders debated about the divinity of Christ. They concluded that **Jesus is God and man at the same time.**
  - Seven ecumenical (representing several different Christian Churches) councils that resulted in the Nicene Creed.



# 3<sup>rd</sup> Century —Early Monasticism

Late 3<sup>rd</sup> c. AD – Present Day



- With the cessation of persecution, martyrdom was no longer a possibility, and this allowed a new form of spirituality to emerge—the white martyrdom of Monasticism.
- The monks saw themselves as the successors of the martyrs; frontline fighters in the struggle against the world, the flesh, and the devil.



**ANTHONY OF EGYPT**

251 – 356 AD

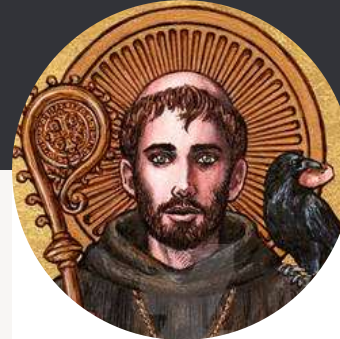
- Considered the father of Christian monasticism.
- Retreated into the Egyptian desert in the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. and lived there in solitude.
- His teachings and life laid the foundation for monasticism.



**PATRICK OF IRELAND**

385 – 461 AD

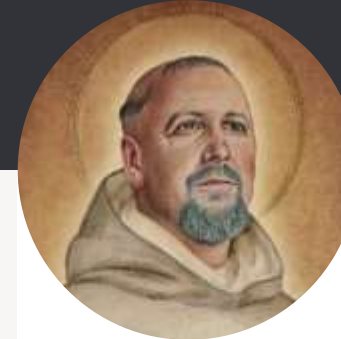
- Played a major role in the spread of Christianity in Ireland.
- Established monastic communities where study of the Scriptures and pursuit of holiness was encouraged.



**BENEDICT OF NURSIA**

480 – 547 AD

- Regarded as the founder of Western monasticism.
- Established the Benedictine Order.
- Authored the "Rule of Saint Benedict", the basis of Middle Age monastic life.



**BERNARD OF CLAIRVAUX**

1090 – 1153 AD

- A prominent Cistercian monk theologian.
- He emphasized a return to the simplicity and austerity of early monasticism and contemplative prayer.



**FRANCIS OF ASSISI**

1181 – 1226 AD

- Renowned for founding the Franciscan Order.
- He embraced a life of poverty, preaching, and service to the poor.
- Franciscans were among the most prominent orders in the Middle Ages.

# Constantine —the Great



Feb. 272 – May 337 AD

Constantine the Great was the first Christian Roman Emperor who ruled from 306 to 337 AD.

He played a pivotal role in the transformation of the Roman Empire from paganism to Christianity.

He is best known for issuing the Edit of Milan which granted religious tolerance to Christians and essentially ended Christian persecution in the Roman Empire.



313 AD

He played a major role in political and administrative reforms in the empire.

He established Constantinople (modern-day Istanbul) as the empire capital.



330 AD

Constantine's victory in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge was influenced by his vision of the Christian symbol, the Chi-Rho. Thereafter, he embraced Christianity.



312 AD

Constantine convened the Council of Nicea to establish Christian theological unity and combat heresy.



325 AD

Constantine laid the foundation for the dominance of Christianity in the Roman Empire. He died on May 22, 337 AD and is remembered as one of the most influential emperors in Roman history.



337 AD

# PART 2b – Constantine to Middle Age

## Growth of the Early Church



FLAVIA JULIA HELENA

- The reign of Constantine was a turning point in Church History.
- Church architecture was born as Christian moved from worshipping in caves to stately houses of worship.
- Helena, mother of Constantine the Great, was a devoted Christian and Constantine's closest advisor
- Helen is credited for the construction and beautification of...



Church of the Nativity—  
in Bethlehem  
Dedicated  
May 31, 339 AD

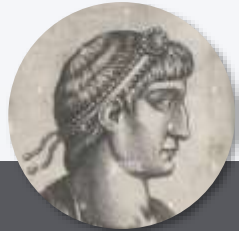


Church of Eleona—  
On the Mount of Olives  
Built: 333 AD

## Roman Emperors – Notable Christian Rulers



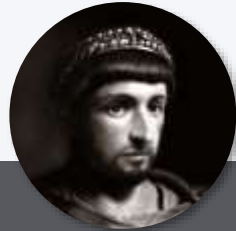
### VALENTINIAN I



364 - 375 AD

- Called "...a good man and capable of holding the reins of the empire."
- A steadfast Christian that rose through the military ranks.

### THEODOSIUS I



379 - 395 AD

- A devout Christian and the last man to rule a unified Eastern and Western Roman Empire.
- Made Christianity the Empire's official religion (379 AD).

### PULCHERIA



414 - 453 AD

- Ruled as a regent for her brother, Theodosius II.
- The driving force behind the Council of Chalcedon (unification of the Church).

### JUSTINIAN I



527 - 565 AD

- After Constantine, he is the best-known Christian Emperor.
- He made great efforts to revitalize the Empire.
- Rebuilt Constantinople and built Hagia Sophia.

# PART 2c – Middle Age to Pre-Reformation

## Main Doctrinal Controversies in Church History – Early Centuries



### Arian Controversy— Arius of Alexandria

325 AD

Arius of Alexandria lived in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. His views were considered heretical. He held the following beliefs:

- Jesus was created – There was a time when Jesus did not exist.
- Heterousios – (Greek heteros, "different"; ousia, "essence"). The belief that Jesus was of a different essence than God the Father.

He emphasized the uniqueness and transcendence of God. His main opponent was Athanasius. At the Council of Nicea, it was established that Jesus was of the same substance (homoousios) as the Father.



### Nestorian Controversy— Nestorius of Constantinople

431 AD

Nestorius was the Archbishop of Constantinople from April 10, 438 AD to August 431 AD and the Nestorian Controversy surrounded his understanding of the nature of Christ.

- Hypostatic union – Nestorian theology suggests that there were two separate and distinct persons in the incarnate Christ (human and divine).

Cyril, the Archbishop of Alexandria opposed this teaching and believed that Christ was one person with two natures (fully human and fully divine). The Council of Ephesus ruled Nestorius a heretic.



### Monophysite Controversy— Eutyches

5<sup>th</sup> c. AD

Eutyches was an archimandrite (a senior monk) and is credited with the Monophysite view of Christ's nature. However, it is said that he rejected this interpretation of his teachings.

- Monophysitism – (Greek monos, "one"; physis, "nature"). The view that after incarnation, Jesus had only one nature; His human nature was subsumed with His divine nature. His nature was neither fully human or fully divine.

This controversy took place in the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> centuries. And against the attempts of the Council of Chalcedon, the Coptic and Syriac Orthodox Churches and the Armenian Apostolic Church emerged.

# PART 2c – Middle Age to Pre-Reformation

## Main Doctrinal Controversies in Church History – Middle Age



### Filioque Controversy—The Great Schism

9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> c. AD

The key players in the Filioque Controversy were the bishops and theologians of Western Europe and what later became the Eastern Orthodox Church.

- **Filioque** – A phrase that affirms the belief that the Holy Spirit also proceeds from the Son.

In the 9<sup>th</sup> century, the Latin Church (West) began inserting the phrase “Filioque” into the Nicene Creed. The original creed stated that the Holy Spirit comes from the Father.

The Eastern Orthodox Church argued that the phrase had been introduced without the consent of the Ecumenical Council and felt their authority had been undermined.

“...charge some that they teach no other doctrine,

Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith: *so do*.

Now the end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conscience, and of faith unfeigned:

From which some having swerved have turned aside unto vain jangling;

Desiring to be teachers of the law; understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.

But we know that the law is good, if a man use it lawfully;”

I TIMOTHY  
1: 4 - 8

# PART 2c – Middle Age to Pre-Reformation

## The Great Schism of 1054

### CATHOLIC CHURCH VS. ORTHODOX CHURCH

- Tensions between the Eastern (Constantinople) and the Western (Rome) Church had been brewing for centuries before the 1054 Schism.
- Causes of the tension:
  - Different language – The East preferred Greek and the West stuck with Latin.
  - Doctrinal disputes (the Filioque Controversy).
  - Political and geographical factors.
  - Ecclesiastical authority – The West placed greater authority on the Pope; the East emphasized the authority of the ecumenical councils.





# Stay Tuned for Part 3

