

Outline of Church History

I. Background and History of the First Century

A. Cultural Background

1. Greeks

a) History

(1) Minoans (?? – 1450)

(2) Heroic: Mycenaeans (1450 – 1100)

(a) Warrior class

(b) Culminates in Trojan War (c. 1200)

(3) Dark Period (1100 – 800)

(a) Dorian Invasion

(b) Mycenaeans scattered to Greece and Ionia

(4) Poetic (800 – 500)

(a) Homer

(b) Other poets - language

(c) Aristocratic (700 – 500)

(5) Militaristic: Democratic (500 – 400)

(6) Philosophic (400 – 300)

(7) Hellenistic (300 – 100)

b) Cultural Contribution

(1) Extraordinary development of thought (Plato and Aristotle)

(2) Extraordinary development of language

(3) Unified ancient world under Alexander and Hellenism

(4) A word on Greek metaphysics

2. Romans

a) History

(1) Founder – Aeneas and Trojan War

(2) Romulus and Remus (753)

(3) Period of Roman Kings (753 – 509)

(4) Period of Roman Republic (509 – 49)

(5) Imperial Rome (49 – 476 A.D.)

(a) Julius Caesar (49 – 44)

(b) Augustus Caesar (31 – 14 A.D.)

(c) Tiberius Caesar (14 – 37)

(d) Caligula (37 – 41)

(e) Claudius (41 – 54)

(f) Nero (54 – 68)

(g) Galba (68)

(h) Otho (68)

(i) Vitellius (68-69)

(j) Vespasian (69 – 79)

b) Herod

(1) Son of Procurator (Antipater)

(a) Idumaeen (conquered by John Hyrcanus in 130)

(b) Friend of famous Romans

(c) Died in 41

(2) Herod

- (a) Appointed procurator after father's death**
- (b) Married to Doris (Antipater – executed in 4 B.C.)**
- (c) Banished Doris and married Mariamne (Alexandros; Aristobulus – executed in 7 B.C. – Son Agrippa I, Agrippa II)**
- (d) 31-Battle of Actium**
- (e) Major building projects in Jerusalem, Syria, Caesarea, and elsewhere**
- (f) Executed Mariamne and married Mariamne (Herod Philip)**
- (g) Malthace (Archelaus and Antipas)**
- (h) Cleopatra of Jerusalem (Herod Philip II)**

c) Culture

(1) Political Stability – Pax Romana

(2) Roman Roads – safe, fast

3. Jewish

a) History

(1) Patriarchal period (2000 – 1500)

- (a) Abraham**
- (b) Isaac**
- (c) Jacob**
- (d) Joseph and the brothers into Egypt**

(2) Tribal period (1500 – 1100)

- (a) Exodus – 1447**
- (b) Wilderness (1446 – 1406)**
- (c) Conquest (1406 – 1400)**

(d) **Judges (1350 – 1100)**

(3) Monarchy (1100 – 586)

(a) **United Monarchy (1100 – 930)**

(b) **Divided Monarchy (930 – 586)**

(i) Northern Tribes deported in 722

(ii) Southern tribes in 586

(4) Exile (586 – 536)

(a) **Babylon and elsewhere**

(b) **Cyrus authorizes return to land**

(5) Imperial Control

(a) **Babylonians (586 – 539)**

(b) **Persians (539 – 332)**

(c) **Greece (332 – 165)**

(d) **Revolt and Independence (165 – 63)**

(e) **Rome (63 – 70 A.D.)**

b) Culture and religion

***(1) Expectation – Rising anticipation of Messiah
(Daniel)***

***(2) Separation – zealously monotheistic since the
exile – special exceptions from Rome***

***(3) Legislation – Trustees of the Oracles of God –
their greatest prize (Rom. 2)***

***(4) Polarization – Liberals (tobiads-Sadducees) and
Conservatives (oniads-Pharisees) and others
(Essenes; Zealots)***

B. Biblical History of First Century

1. Life of Christ

a) 6 B.C. – Birth

b) 4 B.C. – Death of Herod

c) Extra-Biblical Sources to life of Christ

(1) Suetonius (120 A.D.): “He [Claudius] expelled the Jews from Rome, on account of the riots in which they were constantly indulging, at the instigation of Chrestus.” (Referring to the expulsion of Jews in A.D. 49 under Claudius – referred to by Luke in Acts 18:2)

(2) Tacitus: “They got their name from Christ, who was executed by sentence of the procurator Pontius Pilate in the reign of Tiberius. That checked the pernicious superstition for a short time, but it broke out afresh—not only in Judea, where the plague first arose, but in Rome itself, where all the horrible and shameful things in the world collect and find a home.” (This is the only pagan reference to Pontius Pilate – we learn more from Josephus and Philo)

(3) Josephus: Now there arose about this time a source of further trouble in one Jesus, a wise man who performed surprising works, a teacher of men who gladly welcome strange things. He led away many Jews, and also many of the Gentiles. He was the so-called Christ. When Pilate, acting on information supplied by the chief men among us, condemned him to the cross, those who had attached themselves to him at first did not cease to cause trouble, and the tribe of Christians, which has taken this name from him, is not extinct even today

- d) 9 A.D. – Jesus visits temple for Bar Mitzpah**
- e) 14 – Augustus died – Tiberius (step son) takes the throne**
- f) 28 – 15th Year – John the Baptist appears in Judea**
 - (1) Messianic Judgment is coming*
 - (2) Repent and prepare*
- g) Jesus Baptized (messiah) and tested (last Adam)**
- h) 29 – the High Point of Jesus Career**
- i) 30 – The Passion**
 - (1) Sunday – King-Priest triumph and inspection*
 - (2) Tuesday – Sentence pronounced and judgment predicted – Old (Mosaic) Covenant repudiated*
 - (3) Thursday – A New Covenant solemnized*
 - (4) Friday – New Covenant ratified in crucifixion*
 - (5) Sunday – New Covenant Vindicated in resurrection*
- j) Ascension – All authority – Christ ascends to his throne**
- k) Pentecost – New Covenant empowered**
 - (1) The Holy Spirit empowers the church*
 - (2) Speaking in tongues – the gospel for the world*
 - (3) Peter’s sermon on Joel*

2. The Jewish Church

- a) Healing the lame man (Acts 3 – 4)**
- b) The community (fellowship and warning)**
- c) Martyrdom of Stephen – persecution begins**

3. From Jew to Gentile

- a) Philip preaches in Samaria (1/2 Jews)**
- b) Conversion of Paul (apostle to the Gentiles)**
- c) 31 – 33: Paul remains in Damascus**
- d) 34 – Paul returns to Jerusalem – and then to Tarsus**
- e) 37 –**

(1) Conversion of Cornelius (God-Fearer)

(2) Caligula becomes emperor

- f) 41 –**

(1) Barnabas visits church in Antioch, and gets Paul

(2) Claudius becomes emperor of Rome

- g) 44 – Famine Visit**

- h) 45 – James writes the Book of James**

- i) 46 – 47:**

(1) Paul and Barnabas on first missionary journey

(2) Agrippa I dies in Caesarea

- j) 48 – Paul confronts Peter in Antioch**
- k) 49 – Paul’s letter to the Galatians**
- l) 50 – The Jerusalem Council (Acts 15)**
- m) 51 – 53 – The second missionary journey (18 months in Corinth – 1 and 2 Thessalonians)**
- n) 54 – 58 – The third missionary journey**

(1) Nero becomes emperor

(2) 54 – 57 – Ephesus

(3) Apollos in Corinth

(4) Apollos leaves Corinth

(5) 56 – First Corinthians

(6) Judaizers cause rebellion of church

(7) 57 – Paul’s visit in sorrow to Corinth

(8) Paul’s severe letter by Titus

(9) Paul meets Titus in Macedonia

(10) Second Corinthians

(11) Winter in Corinth – Romans

- o) Paul arrested in Jerusalem**

(1) Addresses the crowd

(2) Addresses the Sanhedrin

(3) Addresses Felix

- p) 58 – 60: Paul in Caesarea in prison**

- q) 60 -**

(1) Paul addresses Festus

(2) Paul addresses Agrippa II

r) 60 – 61: Trip to Rome

s) 61 – 63: Paul in Prison in Rome

(1) Ephesians

(2) Philippians

(3) Colossians

(4) Philemon

t) 63 – 65: Paul's fourth missionary journey

(1) Titus

(2) 1 Timothy

u) 65 – 66: Paul in Rome

(1) 2 Timothy

(2) Execution

4. The Jewish Revolt

a) Revolt in 66

(1) Revolt in Jerusalem

(2) Gestius Florus surrounds Jerusalem

(3) Withdraws and defeated

(4) Christians flee Jerusalem

b) 66 – 69: Vespasian puts down revolt in Judea

c) 70: Titus destroys Jerusalem and the temple

II. Ecumenical Christianity (Second through Fifth Centuries)

A. *The Second and Third Centuries*

1. Personalities

a) Clement of Rome (95)

b) Ignatius of Antioch (115)

c) Justin Martyr (150)

d) Irenaeus (180)

e) Tertullian (180)

f) Clement of Alexandria (230)

g) Origen (250)

2. Writings

a) Large numbers of writings produced

(1) Homologomena – accepted as canonical

(2) Antilogomena – disputed as canonical

(3) Spurious writings – Gnostic

b) Criteria of Canonicity

(1) Apostolic Origins

(2) Theological Integrity

(3) Use in the Church

3. The Church in the World

a) The condition of the Roman World

- (1) Over half were slaves*
- (2) Bloodthirsty hunger for gratuitous bloodshed*
- (3) “They eat and then they vomit, they vomit and then they eat” (Seneca)*
- (4) Fully degraded sexual practices*
- (5) Military despotism*

b) Occasions of persecution

- (1) First persecution from the Jewish world*
- (2) Nero – 64 – 68*
- (3) Domitian (95)*
- (4) Trajan (98 – 117) (Pliny’s Letter)*
- (5) Antoninus Pius – Martyrdom of Polycarp*
- (6) Marcus Aurelius – Justin Martyr*
- (7) Diocletian – the last gasp*

c) Reasons for persecution

- (1) Political – Refused to worship Caesar (Kaiser kurios)*
- (2) Religious – Charged with Atheism (Polycarp)*
- (3) Social – Identified with lower classes – charged with cannibalism and incest*
- (4) Economic – loss of income from idolatrous practices*

d) Effect of Church on the world

- (1) Christian Morality:*

(a) “We, who once served lust, now find our delight only in pure morals; we, who once followed sorcery, have now consecrated ourselves to the eternal good God; we, who once loved gain above all, now give up what we have for the common use, and share with very needy one; we, who once hated and killed each other; we, who would have no common hearth with foreigners for difference of customs, now, since the appearance of Christ, live with them, pray for our enemies, seek to convince those who hate us without cause, that they may regulate their life according to the glorious teaching of Christ, and receive from the all-ruling God the same blessings with ourselves.”(Justin Martyr)

(2) *Public Entertainment:*

(a) “It was the Christian witness that finally conquered these: “There is scarcely, any other single reform so important in the moral history of mankind as the suppression of the gladiatorial shows, and this feat must be almost exclusively ascribed to the Christian church. When we remember how extremely few of the best and greatest men of the Roman world had absolutely condemned the games of the amphitheatre, it is impossible to regard, without the deepest admiration, the unwavering and uncompromising consistency of the patristic denunciations.” (Lecky – History of European Morality)

(3) *Slavery:*

(a) Widespread – no conception of human value or equality, none

(b) The Christian attack – based on moral power, not political assault

(c) Gradual erosion of the institution throughout the period

(4) *Family:*

(a) Marriage and family were not recognizable in Roman world-Women had few rights, pedophilia and homosexual practice widely praised and viewed as divinely sanctioned

(b) The Christian “purge” – strong emphasis on celibacy and chastity. Women emancipated.

(c) Only later did marriage and family come into more reasonable focus.

B. Theological Attacks and Controversies

- 1. Logos Christology (*ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος...*)**
 - a) Loaded term to the Greeks**
 - b) Correlates to Jewish “word” (Gen. 1; Pro. 8)**
 - c) Philo – Jewish Gnosticism (Alexandria)**
 - d) Heavy use by Christian apologists (e.g., Justin)**

- 2. The Anti-Logos reaction (Antioch)**
 - a) The a-logoi**
 - (1) Rejected John’s prologue*
 - (2) Rejected the term logos as applied to Christ*
 - b) Ebionites (Second Century)**
 - (1) Hard Monotheism*
 - (2) Jesus is human Jewish Messiah*
 - (3) Pre-millennial eschatology*
 - (4) Group survived until 5th Century*
 - c) Paul of Samosata – Bishop of Antioch (200 – 275)**
 - (1) Rejected deity of Christ and Logos Christology*
 - (2) Taught adoptionism – Christ became a “god” at baptism (similar to Jehovah’s Witnesses)*
 - (3) Unity with God is moral, not ontological*
 - (4) Drifted toward works-based soteriology*
 - (5) Called Dynamic Monarchianism*

3. Alexandrian Christianity

a) General characteristics (Gnosticism)

- (1) Heavily influenced by Greek metaphysics*
- (2) Subtle drift toward pantheism*
- (3) Heavy emphasis on Logos as emanation*
- (4) Gradual drift toward docetism*
- (5) Drift toward mystical soteriology*
- (6) Tended toward eastern (other-worldly) eschatology*

b) Marcion (110 – 160)

- (1) Generally Gnostic, but with some distinctives*
- (2) Jesus was savior sent by True God, and Paul was his chief spokesman*
- (3) Christianity is distinct from, and opposed to, Judaism*
- (4) He rejected the entire Old Testament and its god, who he called a demi-urge with inferior character*
- (5) He gave the church its first canon – Paul's letters and edited version of Luke*
- (6) Probably inspired the first orthodox canon – the Muritorian Canon*

c) Sabellius (First half third century)

- (1) Viewed God modalistically (like Philo)*
- (2) Emanation theory of Creation (similar to Christian Science)*
- (3) Central phrase: homo ousias (ὁμο οὐσίας)*
- (4) Also used: God of God, Light of Light*

*(5) Condemned by Antioch in 268 (substituted –
homoi ousia)*

C. The Ecumenical Councils

1. The Council of Nicaea (325)

a) Lucian (240 – 312)

(1) Successor to Paul of Samosata

(2) Accepted calling Christ the Logos of God

(3) Rejected the term “homo ousia”

*(4) Saw affirmation of deity of Christ as threat to
monotheism*

(5) God is one – all else is created

(6) Logos created first of all (Prov. 8 – the word)

*(7) Logos sent into world with human body – and
called “Son of God” (υἱοῦ θεοῦ)*

*(8) Son, through dynamic process, becomes
immutable sub-deity*

b) Arius (250 – 336)

(1) Disciple of Lucian, but resided in Alexandria

(2) God alone is eternal (not son, not spirit)

(3) God creates all things voluntarily

(4) God alone is unbegotten

(5) “To beget” means “to create”

*(6) God created an independent substance he used to
create all else*

(7) The Son is a “perfect creature”

*(8) Incarnation involves the unification of human
body with divine logos (no human soul)*

c) Alexander of Alexandria (c. 260 – 326)

(1) Christ must belong to the side of God to bring people to God

(2) Christ is begotten, but eternally begotten

(3) Christ is “generated” by the father

d) Events Leading to Council

(1) Bishop of Alexandria had Arius excommunicated in 318

(2) Arius appealed to have excommunication rescinded

(3) Debate raged for five years

(4) 323 – Constantine came to power

(5) Convened and presided over Council of 318 Bishops

(6) Arius condemned and Alexander vindicated

e) The Conclusions of Nicaea

(1) The Nicene Creed (of 325)

(2) Affirms homo ousias (but not Saballius)

(3) Affirms Trinity (though the term is not used)

(4) Rejects Arius as a subtle docetist

(5) Not clear on the term “begotten”

2. First Council of Constantinople (381)

a) Apollinaris (c. 320 – 390)

(1) Bishop of Laodicea in Syria

(2) Worked to improve Arianism, which he admired

(3) Subscribed to trichotomy – Greek anthropology

(4) Jesus was body, soul, and logos

(5) The logos is the “ground” of the human spirit

(6) Mixture of human and divine in Christ

b) The council

(1) Adopted seven canons

(2) Rejected and condemned Apollinarianism as docetic

(3) Expanded the Nicene Creed to its present form

3. The Council of Ephesus (431)

a) Nestorius (386 – 451)

(1) Educated in Antioch

(2) Archbishop of Constantinople (428 – 431)

(3) Objected to use of “theotokos – bearer of God – for Mary

(4) Christ had two distinct natures – closely joined in a moral fellowship in one will

(5) Because Christ was two natures, he was necessarily two “persons,” perfectly united

b) The Council

(1) Concluded that Nestorius destroyed the unity of Christ

(2) Concluded that in Christ there is “an unconfused union” of two natures in one person

(3) Nestorius was condemned and removed from his post

4. The First Council of Chalcedon (451)

a) Eutyches (380 – 456)

(1) An elder at Constantinople

(2) A vehement opponent of Nestorius at Ephesus

(3) Noted that a union of person, must mean a union of nature

(4) The nature of Christ was “theanthropic” (monophysitism)

(5) Christ born of two natures now exists indistinguishable in one nature

b) The Council

(1) Most important in connection with the doctrine of Christ

(2) The largest council in first six centuries

(3) The Symbol of Chalcedon

(4) Affirmed “vera homo; vera deus”

(5) Affirmed the four negatives

(6) Leaves mystery intact

5. The Second Council of Constantinople (553)

- a) Reaffirmed previous councils**
- b) Rejected a more subtle form of monophysite heresy**

6. The Third Council of Constantinople (681)

- a) Rejected monothelite heresy**
- b) Affirmed Christ had two wills – will is part of nature**

7. The Second Council of Nicea (787)

- a) Affirmed the veneration of icons – with qualifications**
- b) This council is rejected by many protestants**