

MEN OF GRACE & GRANITE
SERIES 12: A SURVEY OF CHURCH HISTORY
AND HISTORICAL THEOLOGY
(by Matt Johnston)

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- **What Is Church History?**
 - Church History is the study of the unfolding of Christ’s promise to build His church (Matt 16:18).
 - “There are two histories; there is what we may call ‘The History of the Church,’ that is, of human institutions, forms, doctrines, and actions; and ‘The History of Christianity’ which has brought into the world, and still preserves, a new life, a life divine, the history of the government of that King who has said, ‘the words which I speak unto you are spirit and life’” (J. H. Merle d’Aubigné, “The History of Christianity,” delivered in Geneva, 1832).
- **What Is Historical Theology?** (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 23–29)
 - “Historical theology is the study of the interpretation of Scripture and the formulation of doctrine by the church in the past.”
 - Synchronic Approach: Focuses on theology in a certain time, a particular theologian, or a specific theological school or tradition. For example: the theology of Martin Luther, Calvin’s understanding of providence, or the Trinity in the 4th century.
 - Diachronic Approach: Studies the development of theology throughout the entirety of church history. For example: a study of justification or eschatology throughout the ages: ancient, medieval, and modern.
- **Why Study Church History and Historical Theology?**
 - Christianity is a religion rooted in history:
 - Christianity is not merely an abstract philosophy, but is rooted in the reality of history, most importantly the incarnation, resurrection, and ascension of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. 1 Cor 15; 1 John 1:1–3).
 - Beginning with Pentecost, God has been saving His elect and gathering them together into churches in time, space, and history.
 - Context gives us perspective:
 - “The history of the church has practical value for every Christian, as a storehouse of warning and encouragement, of consolation and counsel” (Schaff, *Church History*, 1:21).
 - “Why is it important to hold that Christ is one person, two natures? Why do Protestants hold to justification by the imputation of Christ’s righteousness through faith? The doctrines themselves, bluntly stated, can sometimes seem abstract and irrelevant; but when they are set in the context of the church’s history and life, their true significance and the reasons why they have been formulated in the way they have, all become apparent” (Trueman, “The Trials of Church History,” *The Trials of Theology*, 134).
 - Saints before us have been illuminated by the Spirit:

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- Seeing how those who have come before us have interpreted and interacted with Scripture can help us understand the Scriptures more faithfully.
- “The Fathers are not Scripture. They are senior conversation partners about Scripture and its meaning. We listen to them respectfully, but we are not afraid to disagree where they err” (Haykin, *Rediscovering the Church Fathers*, 29).
- Doctrines have been articulated for a long time in a certain way for a reason. We do well to think twice before abandoning an orthodox articulation of a particular doctrine.
- To embrace the value of church history (tradition) is not to embrace tradition in the Roman Catholic sense, setting it on equal footing with Scripture (cf. the two-source theory, Council of Trent, 1546).
- “A person wearing tinted glasses can avoid the conclusion that the entire world is tinted by being conscious of the glasses themselves. Likewise, if we are to break free from an undue weight of tradition, we must begin by understanding what that tradition is, how we came to be where we are, and how particular elements in our past color our view of the present. It is then that we are free to choose which elements in the past—and in the present—we wish to reject, and which we will affirm” (González, *The Story of Christianity*, 1:xvii).
- What is newer isn’t necessarily better:
 - “Historical theology can guard Christians and churches from the penchant for the novel, the yearning for relevancy, and the tendency to follow strong leaders who are biblically and theologically shallow” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 26).
 - The Reformers certainly didn’t view themselves as beginning a new church. Calvin quotes Augustine hundreds of times in his *Institutes* and Luther’s commentaries are filled with citations of the Church Fathers.
 - “There is a strange idea abroad that in every subject the ancient books should be read only by professionals, and that the amateur should content himself with the modern books. ... [I]f he must read only the new or only the old, I would advise him to read the old. ... A new book is still on its trial and the amateur is not in a position to judge it. It has to be tested against the great body of Christian thought down the ages, and all its hidden implications (often unsuspected by the author himself) have to be brought to light” (C. S. Lewis, “Preface,” *Saint Athanasius, On the Incarnation*, 11–12).
- Today’s heresies are just the old ones recycled:¹
 - “[I]here are few errors or heresies around today that do not have clear parallels and antecedents in church history.”

¹ Adapted from Trueman, “The Theological Importance of Criminal Profiling, or The Case for Church History, Part 1,” <http://matthiasmedia.com/briefing/2009/07/the-theological-importance-of-criminal-profiling-or-the-case-for-church-history-part-1/>.

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- “Open theism, with its denial of God’s comprehensive knowledge of the future? Think 17th-century Socinianism.”
- “Mormonism, with its denial of the full deity of the Lord Jesus Christ? Think fourth-century Arianism.”
- “Modern denials of penal substitutionary atonement? Think 17th-century Socinianism and 18th-century Unitarianism.”
- “There is nothing like reading modern theology without any historical context to make us prey for any doctrinal cowboy or know-nothing who rides into town. Evacuate Christianity of its history and you leave a dangerous vacuum that can be filled with any old nonsense.”
- Church History helps us understand Roman Catholicism:
 - “Historically speaking we must differentiate between ‘lowercase-c’ catholic Christianity and ‘capital-C’ Roman Catholic Christianity” (Litfin, *Getting to Know the Church Fathers*, 23)
 - The word “catholic” comes from the Greek word *katholikos* (καθολικός) and means “general” or “universal.” Already in the second century, long before the first real pope in the medieval sense, we read of “all the congregations of the holy catholic church in every place” (Martyrdom of Polycarp, 1.1) and “the whole catholic church throughout the world” (Martyrdom of Polycarp, 8.1).
 - What are we to think of things like “Evangelicals and Catholics Together: The Christian Mission in the Third Millennium” (1994)?
 - J. C. Ryle argues that when there is talk of snuggling up to Roman Catholicism, we must remember that to join hands with Rome is to forsake the truths for which those who came before us died (he writes of the English Reformation):
 - “In the name of the Lord let us set up our banners. If ever we would meet Ridley and Latimer and Hooper [all martyred by Rome] in another world without shame, let us ‘contend earnestly’ for the truths which they died to preserve. There is a voice in the blood of the martyrs. What does that voice say? It cries aloud from Oxford, Smithfield, and Gloucester [places where they were killed]—‘Resist to the death the Popish doctrine of the Real Presence, under the forms of the consecrated bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper!’” (J. C. Ryle, *Light from Old Times*).²
- Historical Theology can help keep us from being overly self-focused:

² Available as a free e-book: <https://www.monergism.com/light-old-times-ebook>.

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- “A ... benefit that historical theology renders the church is to protect against the individualism that is rampant today among Christians ... This rich heritage protects against the tendency to select the doctrines one likes and to reject those one does not like, thus giving in to one’s sinful propensities” (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 27).
- We need to have our hearts stirred by the radical examples of the men and women who have followed Jesus before us. In every age we find examples of those who denied themselves, took up their cross, and followed Christ. We do well to remember our faith is the same as theirs (Jude 3):
 - The Church Fathers who were martyred for their faith at the hands of the Romans in the first centuries of the church (e.g., Ignatius, Polycarp)
 - 16th-century English reformers martyred under Henry VIII for denying transubstantiation and purgatory or translating Scripture into English (e.g., Bilney, Frith, Tyndale) and those martyred under the reign of “Bloody” Queen Mary I (e.g., Latimer, Hooper, Cranmer)
 - The 18,000 Scottish Covenanters executed under Charles II between 1661 and 1688 over the issue of the headship of the church, the right to appoint their own spiritual leaders according to biblical qualifications, and the right to practice church discipline
 - The missionaries who gave up all for the gospel in the 19th century (e.g., Carey and Judson)

A Basic Sweep of Church History (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 1:14–19)

- Introduction
 - Church History “is generally agreed to divide the history of Christianity into three principal parts—ancient, medieval, and modern.”³
 - For a brief (112 pages) and interesting overview, see *Church History 101: The Highlights of Twenty Centuries* by Ferguson, Beeke, and Haykin (Reformation Heritage Books, 2016).
- **I. Ancient Christianity:** from the birth of Christ to Gregory the Great. AD 1–590
 - Overview
 - Age of the Christian Fathers
 - The foundation, in doctrine, government, and worship, for all subsequent history

³ Cf. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, Vol. 1 (Edinburgh, Banner of Truth: 1994), 6–8. Cunningham offers the very same breakdown; cf. Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* 2nd ed. (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1995), who offers eight ages: the Age of Jesus and the Apostles, the Age of Catholic Christianity, the Age of the Christian Roman Empire, the Christian Middle Ages, the Age of the Reformation, the Age of Reason and Revival, the Age of Progress, the Age of Ideologies.

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- Constantine, the first “Christian” emperor, at the beginning of the fourth century marks a decisive turn; Christianity rising from a persecuted sect to the prevailing religion of the Greco-Roman period
- Periods
 - **First Period (ca. AD 1–100):** The Life of Christ and the Apostolic church. From the Incarnation to the death of John.
 - **Second Period (AD 100–311):** Christianity under persecution in the Roman Empire. From the death of John to Constantine, the first “Christian” emperor.
 - **Third Period (AD 311–590):** Christianity in union with the Greco-Roman period, and amid the storms of the great migration of nations. From Constantine the Great to Pope Gregory I.
- **II. Medieval Christianity:** from Gregory I to the Reformation. AD 590–1517
 - Overview
 - “Medieval Christianity is, on the one hand, a legitimate continuation and further development of ancient Catholicism; on the other hand, a preparation for Protestantism” (Schaff, *History*, 4:11).
 - Rise of monastic orders, spread of Islam and the Crusades
 - The Great Schism between East and West (1054)
 - In rise of absolute papacy beginning with Gregory the Great (590)
 - Periods
 - **Fourth Period (AD 590–1049):** Christianity planted among the Teutonic, Celtic, and Slavonic nations. From Gregory I to Gregory VII/Hildebrand.
 - **Fifth Period (AD 1049–1294):** The church under the papal hierarchy, and the scholastic theology. From Gregory VII to Boniface VIII.
 - **Sixth Period (AD 1294–1517):** The decay of medieval Catholicism, and the preparatory movements for the Reformation. From Boniface VIII to Luther.
- **III. Modern Christianity:** from the Reformation of the sixteenth century to the present time. AD 1517–present
 - Overview
 - Modern church history is the age of Protestantism in conflict with Romanism.
 - 16th century: The evangelical renovation of the church, and the papal counter-reform
 - 17th century: the period of scholastic orthodoxy, polemic confessionalism, and comparative stagnation. The reformatory motion ceases on the continent, but goes on in the mighty Puritanic struggle in England, and extends to the American colonies.
 - 18th century: the Pietistic and Methodistic revival of practical religion. The second half of the eighteenth century begins the vast overturning of traditional ideas and institutions. Deism in England, atheism in France, and rationalism in Germany represent the various degrees of the great modern apostasy from the orthodox creeds.

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- 19th century: the further development of these negative and destructive tendencies, *but* with it also the revival of Christian faith and church life.
- Periods
 - **Seventh Period (AD 1517–1648):** The evangelical Reformation, and the Roman Catholic Reaction. From Luther to the Treaty of Westphalia.
 - **Eighth Period (AD 1648–1790):** The age of polemic orthodoxy and exclusive confessionalism, with reactionary and progressive movements. From the Treaty of Westphalia to the French Revolution.
 - **Ninth Period (AD 1790–present):** The spread of infidelity, and the revival of Christianity in Europe and America, with missionary efforts encircling the globe. From the French Revolution to the present time.

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The History of Ancient Christianity (1–590)

First Period: The life of Christ and the apostolic church (1–100)

- **General Introduction to the Period** (Schaff, *History*, 1:194–195)
 - The apostolic period extends from the Day of Pentecost to the death of St. John, and covers about seventy years, from AD 30 [or 33] to 100.⁴
 - The field of action is Palestine, and gradually extends over Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy. The most prominent centers are Jerusalem, Antioch, and Rome.
 - As early as AD 58 Paul could say: “From Jerusalem and round about even unto Illyricum, I have fully preached the gospel of Christ” (Rom 15:19).
- **Key Dates and Events**
 - **AD 30/33:** The church is founded on Pentecost, the first Lord’s Day.
 - **AD 64:** A fire broke out and burned in Rome for six days and six nights. Rumors said that Nero started the fire himself. Ten of the fourteen sections of the city were destroyed.
 - Tacitus (AD 109): “But neither human help, nor imperial munificence, nor all the modes of placating Heaven, could stifle scandal or dispel the belief that the fire had taken place by order. Therefore, to scotch the rumor, Nero substituted as culprits, and punished with the utmost refinements of cruelty, a class of men, loathed for their vices, whom the crowd styled Christians . . . ” (Tacitus, *Annals*, 15.44).
 - **AD 70:** “Emperor Vespasian’s forces, led by Titus, broke through the walls of Jerusalem, looted and burned the temple, and carried off the spoils to Rome [to build things like the Colosseum] . . . ” (Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language*, 23).
 - **AD 44–96:** The New Testament is written (James in AD 44 and Revelation between AD 94 and 96).
- **What Happened to the Apostles?**
 - Most of what we know is from non-authoritative tradition: “What became of Paul, Peter, and the other apostles? From an early date, traditions began to appear claiming that one or another of them had preached in a particular region, or had suffered martyrdom in one way or another. Most of these traditions are no more than the result of the desire of a church in a particular city to claim apostolic origin” (González, *Story*, 1:27).
 - James the brother of John: Killed by King Herod Agrippa I in ca. AD 44 (Acts 12:1–2).
 - Paul: Many ancient writers agree that he also died in Rome at the time of Nero (ca. AD 64–68). As a Roman citizen, he would have been beheaded.

⁴ Schaff, *History*, 1:217 gives May, AD 30 as a possible date: “This is on the assumption that Christ was born B.C. 4 or 5, and was crucified in April A.D. 30, at an age of thirty-three.” Some are persuaded that Jesus began His ministry when He was thirty-three, and was crucified in AD 33 (Andreas J. Kostenberger and Justin Taylor, *The Final Days of Jesus: The Most Important Week of the Most Important Person Who Ever Lived* [Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014]; Colin J. Humphreys and W. G. Waddington, “The Jewish Calendar, A Lunar Eclipse and the Date of Christ’s Crucifixion,” *Tyndale Bulletin* 43:2 (1992); Harold W. Hoehner, “Chronological Aspects of the Life of Christ Part V: The Year of Christ’s Crucifixion,” *Bibliotheca Sacra* 131:524 (Oct 1974).

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- Thomas: “[F]rom a relatively early date there was a church in India, and ... this church has repeatedly claimed Thomas as its founder” (ibid., 1:30).
- Peter: A trustworthy tradition tells us that he died in Rome under Nero’s persecution. We are told he was crucified upside down (cf. John 21:18–19) (cf. Tertullian, *Prescriptions Against Heresies*, 33: “Rome ... where Peter suffered like his Lord ...”).
- **Peter the First Bishop of Rome?**
 - “The *Pope*, Bishop of Rome and Peter’s successor, ‘is the perpetual and visible source and foundation of the unity both of the bishops and of the whole company of the faithful. For the Roman Pontiff, by reason of his office as Vicar of Christ, and as pastor of the entire Church has full, supreme, and universal power over the whole Church, a power which he can always exercise unhindered’” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 882).
 - The validity of the Roman Catholic explanation of the papacy requires three premises (Schaff, *History*, 1:261–63):⁵
 - **(1) The presence of Peter in Rome**
 - History tells us Peter likely spent some time in Rome and was killed there⁶
 - Paul makes no mention of Peter in Romans
 - **(2) The transferability of Peter’s preeminence on a successor**
 - Matthew 16:18 says nothing of succession (cf. Eph 2:20).
 - Peter’s pioneering work can have no successor any more than Paul’s in the conversion of the Gentiles.
 - **(3) The actual transfer of this prerogative of Peter upon the bishop of Rome**
 - Not upon the bishops of Jerusalem, or Antioch, where he undoubtedly resided, but upon the bishop of Rome, where he cannot be proven to have been from the New Testament.
 - “The first councils were held in Eastern cities and were composed almost altogether of Eastern bishops If any church had a special right to be called the Mistress of all the churches, it surely was the church in Jerusalem” (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 119).
 - The Apostolic Fathers speak of Peter, but make no mention of the above.
 - **Other factors that make Peter an unlikely candidate as Rome’s first pope (ibid.):**
 - Peter was married (Matt 8:14; 1 Cor 9:5).

⁵ Other helpful resources on the papacy include James White, *The Roman Catholic Controversy* (Grand Rapids, MI: Bethany House, 1996); 106ff.; Gregg R. Allison, *Roman Catholic Theology and Practice: An Evangelical Assessment* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2014); Leonardo De Chirico, *A Christian’s Pocket Guide to the Papacy: Its Origin and Role in the 21st Century* (Great Britain: Christian Focus, 2015).

⁶ Catholics have at times claimed Peter was Bishop of Rome from AD 42–67 (Boettner, *Roman Catholicism*, 117; cf. Schaff, *History*, 1:251); *The Catholic Encyclopedia* admits that such claims are based on later sources and so cannot be affirmed with certainty (<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/11744a.htm>).

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- James, not Peter presided over the Council at Jerusalem (Acts 15:1–11).
- Peter was openly rebuked for inconsistency (Gal 2:11–14).
- Peter writes to fellow elders (cf. 1 Pet 5:1–5).
- Earliest claim for the supremacy of the bishop of Rome was AD 441–442 (Sermons of Leo the Great on the 2nd and 3rd anniversary of his ordination to the papacy in Schaff, *NPNF*, Second Series, 12:279–84).

Second Period: Christianity Under Persecution in the Roman Empire (100–311)

- **Overview of the Period** (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 2:7–12).
 - “Despite widespread and determined efforts to eliminate the new faith, it survived and grew. By the reign of Constantine (312–337), the first ‘Christian’ emperor, there were churches in every large town in the empire” (Shelley, *Church History*, 28).
 - The theology of the second and third centuries was mainly *apologetic* against the paganism of Greece and Rome, and *polemic* against the various forms of the Gnostic heresy.
- **The Church Fathers in the Second and Third Centuries**
 - Basics of the Fathers
 - Generally the Fathers “lived between the end of the Apostolic Era (ca. 100) and the deaths of John Damascus (ca. 655/576–ca. 749) in the East and Isidore of Seville (ca. 560–636) in the West” (Haykin, *Church Fathers*, 16).
 - “It has become customary to delineate four main criteria to identify a ‘father of the church’: they must be ancient, orthodox in doctrine, holy in life, and approved by other Christians” (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 19).
 - The Apostolic Fathers
 - “The term ‘Apostolic Fathers’ is traditionally used to designate the collection of the earliest extant Christian writings outside the New Testament. These documents are a primary resource for the study of early Christianity, especially the postapostolic period (ca. A.D. 70–150). They provide significant and often unparalleled glimpses of insights into the life of Christians and the Christian movement during a critical transitional stage in its history” (Holmes, “Introduction,” *The Apostolic Fathers: Greek Texts and English Translations*, 3).
 - Lightfoot’s translation is freely available: www.ccel.org/ccel/lightfoot/fathers.html.
 - **Clement of Rome**
 - 1 Clement, written by Clement of Rome to the Corinthians some time during the last two decades of the first century.
 - 2 Clement, although long associated with Clement of Rome, doesn’t seem to have been composed by him. It is “the oldest surviving complete Christian sermon outside of the New Testament” (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 132).
 - **Ignatius of Antioch**

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- Ignatius’ seven letters are addressed to various churches in Asia Minor.
- He composes his letters on the way to his eventual martyrdom in Rome.
- His letters had three focal points (adapted from *ibid.*, 167):
 - (1) The struggle against false teachers within the church, with a focus on Judaizing legalism and Gnosticism.
 - (2) The unity of the churches.
 - Ignatius also argues for commitment to the bishop, but does so in a way quite different from his contemporary, Clement of Rome (*ibid.*, 168). He explains, “I do not give orders like Peter and Paul: they were apostles...” (Ignatius, *Romans*, 4.3).
 - (3) His own death. He is explicit that he doesn’t want the recipients of his letters to try and stop his execution.
- Theologically significant excerpts from Ignatius
 - Lord’s Day: Speaks of “no longer keeping the Sabbath but living in accordance with the Lord’s day” (Ignatius, *Magnesians*, 9.1).
 - Soteriology: “Jesus Christ, who died for us in order that by believing in his death you might escape death” (Ignatius, *Trallians*, 2.1); “... only let us be found in Christ Jesus, which leads to true life” (Ignatius, *Ephesians* 11.1).
 - Christology: “There is only one physician, who is both flesh and spirit, born and unborn, God in man, true life in death, both from Mary and from God, first subject to suffering and then beyond it, Jesus Christ our Lord” (Eph. 7.2; cf. 18.2, 20.2); “Heartiest greetings blamelessly in Jesus Christ our God” (Ignatius, *Romans*, Salutation).
- **The Martyrdom of Polycarp**
 - The oldest written account of Christian martyrdom outside the New Testament. “Apparently written by eyewitnesses (15.1) not long after the event (18.1), it records in sometimes gruesome detail, the pursuit, arrest, trial, and execution of Polycarp, the beloved eighty-six-year-old bishop of the church of Smyrna” (Holmes, *Apostolic Fathers*, 298).
 - He was likely martyred between AD 155 and 160 (*ibid.*, 301).
 - “But when the magistrate persisted and said, ‘Swear the oath, and I will release you; revile Christ,’ Polycarp replied, ‘For eighty-six years I have been his servant, and he has done me no wrong. How can I blaspheme my King who saved me?’” (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*, 9.3).
- **The Epistle to Diognetus**
 - Likely written between 150–225.
 - See Chapter 5 of the epistle for a fascinating description of Christians.

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○ **Select Post-Apostolic Fathers**

▪ **Justin Martyr the Apologist (100–165)**

- “He found connection points between the church’s proclamation and the thought-world into which he was taking the gospel. Yet he did so without compromising the faith like the many heretical sects” (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 55).
- Major works: *First Apology*, *Second Apology* and his *Dialogue with Trypho*.
- Taught that the true duty of philosophy was to investigate deity (cf. *Dialogue with Trypho*, ANF 1:194).
- Trypho was a Jew and in this work he spent a great deal of time explaining Old Testament prophecies and defending the deity of Christ.
- Justin’s appeal to Trypho toward the end of their dialogue: “I exhort you to give all diligence in this very great struggle for your own salvation, and to be earnest in setting a higher value on the Christ of the Almighty God than your own teachers” (ibid., 1:270).

▪ **Tertullian (160–225)**

- “Tertullian was born ... the son of a Roman Centurion. As an adult he practiced law at Rome until he converted to Christianity from paganism. He became a presbyter in the church at Carthage (near modern-day Tunis in Tunisia), serving there until he broke away from the catholics [not in the Roman Catholic sense] as he became increasingly attracted to a sect of [so called] Spirit-filled prophets called the Montanists” (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 103).
- Father of Latin theology.
- Wrote: *Prescription Against Heretics* and *Against Marcion*.
- He famously noted “What does Athens have to do with Jerusalem?” (*Prescription Against Heretics* 7, ANF 3:246), revealing a bit of his perspective on philosophy and “the blood of Christians is seed” (*semen est sanguis Christianorum*; Apology 50, ANF 3:55), celebrating martyrdom.

▪ **Irenaeus of Lyons (130–200)**

- Helped identify the canon of Scripture, and was the first to use the term “New Testament” in the way we use it today.
- “He grew up in Smyrna, where Bishop of Polycarp presided over the church Through Polycarp, who had been a disciple of the Apostle John, the boy Irenaeus felt that he was experiencing a living connection with the apostolic age” (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 79).

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- His most famous work: *The Detection and Overthrow of What Is Falsely Called 'Knowledge'* (*Against Heresies*; 5 volumes) (ibid., 84).
- **Origen (185–254)**
 - Was born and lived much of his life in Alexandria. His father was martyred when he was 17. He later moved to Caesarea in Palestine.
 - “Origen longed for mystical union with God through Jesus Christ. He interpreted the Bible allegorically to find Christ on every page” (ibid., 143).
 - “Identified three (or sometimes four) ‘senses’ of scripture.” (ibid., 150). He used 2 Corinthians 3:6 to contrast literal and spiritual.
 - He didn’t deny a literal meaning, but viewed that as the most simple or elementary interpretation.
 - “The Millenarianism of the early church was gradually overcome The allegorical interpretation of Scripture, introduced by the Alexandrian school, and sponsored especially by Origen, also had a chilling effect on all millennial hopes” (Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 262).
 - Some think he was protected from excessive allegory because he embraced the Rule of Faith (cf. Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 152).
 - Was an ascetic who took Matthew 19:12 literally and became “a eunuch for the kingdom of God.”
 - He was brutally tortured (burned and limbs were stretched) under the Emperor Decius and died from the wounds he received.
- **Heresies in the Second and Third Centuries**
 - **Gnosticism**
 - Pre/early Gnosticism in the New Testament: Colossians and 1 John.
 - The term Gnosticism comes from the Greek word for knowledge, *gnōsis*. Gnostics were those who thought they had been initiated into a higher level of knowledge.
 - “The gnostics understood themselves to be the elite ‘chosen people’ who, in distinction from the ‘worldly-minded,’ were able to perceive the delicate connection between world (cosmology), humanity (anthropology), and salvation (soteriology). The goal of gnostic teaching was that with the help of insight (*gnosis*), the elect could be freed from the fetters of this world (spirit from matter, light from darkness) and so return to their true home in the Kingdom of Light—for that alone is the meaning of ‘salvation’” (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 2:1033–1034).
 - **Marcion**
 - “Polycarp once ran into Marcion at Rome but completely ignored him. Apparently Marcion was feeling a little insecure about his reputation that day, for he demanded of the bishop, ‘Acknowledge me!’ ‘I do acknowledge you,’ replied Polycarp. ‘You are the

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firstborn of Satan!’ This was probably not the reply Marcion was looking for” (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 106; found in Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.4.4, ANF, I:416).

- Taught that the Old Testament god was different from the New Testament god, and that Docetism, the heresy that Christ merely appeared or seemed to be a man, though He truly was not.
- Rejected the Old Testament in its entirety, and any other portion of Scripture that seemed to him to be Jewish. He was left with most of Paul and Luke’s gospel.

○ **Montanus**

- Came on the scene around 156 and 172.
- Self-proclaimed prophet who spoke much about Christ’s second coming.
- “Montanists insisted that opposition to the new prophecy was blasphemy against the Holy Spirit” (Shelley, *Church History*, 65).
- Movement was too fanatical and too heavily ascetic to gain any traction.

● **The Beginnings of a Shift in Church Government**

- In the New Testament there were two church offices: Elder and deacon.
 - The terms for elder (*presbúteros*), overseer (*epískopos*), and pastor (*poimēn*; cf. the verb *poimainō*) are all connected (Titus 1:5, 7; 1 Pet 5:1–2; Acts 20:17, 28).
 - The words for “overseer” and “elder” continued to be used interchangeably into the third century (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 590).
- Allusions to the two-tiered system in the *Didache* and Polycarp:
 - *Didache*, 15: “Therefore appoint for yourselves bishops (i.e., “overseers”; *epískopous*) and deacons (*diákonous*) worthy of the Lord.”
 - Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*, 5, 6: “Deacons must be blameless The presbyters, for their part, must be compassionate”
- “Faced with a dangerous heresy and confronted with potential divisions in the churches, Ignatius responded with a new form of church government” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 590).
 - This shift resulted in a new structure: Bishop/Overseer (one) / Elders (plurality) / Deacons (plurality).
 - “While Ignatius’s ideal church may have threefold ministry that includes deacons and presbyters, it is the bishop who is constitutive of the church: where he is, the church is [He argues] for the authority and place of the bishop and does not base it ... upon the concept of apostolic succession [contra 1 Clement]” (Holmes, 168).
 - “You must all follow the bishop as Jesus Christ followed the Father, and follow the council of presbyters as you would the apostles; respect the deacons as the commandment of God” (Ignatius, *Smyrnaeans*, 8.1; cf. *Philadelphians*, 4).
- “As the church developed in the third and fourth centuries, the threefold structure introduced by Ignatius became the standard government” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 592; cf. Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 250).

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- Cyprian (d. 258), bishop of Carthage, continued the development of the three-tiered system as he dealt with Novatian and his followers who separated from the church: “There is one church, divided by Christ throughout the whole world into many members, and also one episcopate diffused through a harmonious multitude of many bishops” (Cyprian, *Letter* 51.24, in *ANF*, 5:33).

Third Period: Christianity in union with the Greco-Roman period, and amid the storms of the great migration of nations (AD 311–590)

- **Overview of the Period** (adapted from Schaff, *History* 3:4–10)
 - The reign of Constantine the Great marks the transition of the Christian religion under persecution by the secular government to the beginning of the state-church system.
 - The Christian life of the Nicene and post-Nicene age reveals a mass of worldliness within the church; an entire abatement of chiliasm with its longing after the return of Christ and His glorious reign, and in its stead an easy repose in the present order of things.
 - Monasticism, sought to save the purity of the church and the glory of martyrdom by retreat from the world into the wilderness. The movement often pushed the limits of fanaticism.
 - The Greek church (esp. Basil the Great, Gregory of Nyssa, and Gregory Nazianzus) produced the creeds that defined the orthodox view of the holy Trinity and the person of Christ, while the Latin church made considerable advances with the anthropological and soteriological doctrines of sin and grace (mainly Augustine).
- **Constantine the Great (d. 337)**
 - Before Constantine there was massive persecution under Diocletian.
 - After his conquest of Rome, Constantine met with Lucinius (another ruler), at Milan and made an alliance and agreed upon the Edict of Milan in 313. “Part of what was agreed there was that the persecution of Christians would stop, and that their churches, cemeteries, and other properties would be returned to them” (González, *Story*, 1:107).
 - “Christianity appeared to him, as it proved in fact, the only efficient power for a political reformation of the empire, from which the ancient spirit of Rome was fast departing, while internal, civil, and religious dissensions and the outward pressure of the barbarians threatened a gradual dissolution of society” (Schaff, *History*, 3:14; cf. González, *Story*, 1:118).
 - Constantine’s Christianity (Schaff, *History*, 3:37):
 - As late as 321 he was regularly consulting heathen soothsayers.
 - Until the end of his life he kept the title *Pontifex Maximus*, which declared him high-priest of the heathen hierarchy.
 - He was baptized a few days before his death at 65 years of age.
 - The Impact of Constantine (adapted from González, *Story*, 1:124).
 - With the end of persecution, there was worldliness in the church, and in response monastics attempted to show true devotion by separating from society.

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- Mingling of church history and the history of the Roman Empire
- “Incense ... a sign of respect for the emperor, began appearing in Christian churches”
- Elaborate churches and basilicas in contrast to the previous simple worship.
- There was a shift in the common view on eschatology:
 - “The most striking point in the eschatology of the ante-Nicene age (100–325) is the prominent chiliasm, or millenarianism [from the Latin: *mille anni*] It was indeed not the doctrine of the church embodied in any creed or form of devotion, but a widely current opinion of distinguished teachers, such as Barnabas, Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Tertullian, Methodius, and Lactantius; while Caius, Origen, Dionysius the Great, Eusebius (as afterwards Jerome and Augustine) opposed it” (Schaff, *History*, 2:614).
 - Although some were against *chiliasm* before Constantine (e.g., Origen), “the crushing blow came from the great change in the social condition and prospects of the church in the Nicene age. After Christianity, contrary to all expectation, triumphed in the Roman Empire, and was embraced by the Caesars themselves, the millennial reign, instead of being anxiously waited and prayed for, began to be dated either from the first appearance of Christ, or from the conversion of Constantine and the downfall of paganism, and to be regarded to be realized in the glory of the dominant imperial state-church” (ibid, 2:619).
- **Monasticism**
 - Monasticism is connected with the Greek word *mónos*, which can mean “one” or “alone.”
 - “When Constantine came to power, the life which these hermits had led became increasingly popular. Some travelers who visited the region declared, with obvious exaggeration, that the desert was more populated than some cities No matter how exaggerated these figures may be, the fact to which they point is certain: those who fled society for the withdrawn life of the hermit were legion” (ibid., 142).
 - Simeon Stylites is an example of the excesses of monasticism. Simeon was an ascetic monk, who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries AD. His name comes from the Greek word *stulos*, which means “pillar.” He spent much of his life, some say as many as thirty-seven years, atop a pillar.
- **The First “Real” Roman Catholic Pope**
 - The word “pope” simply means “father.”
 - In the early times it was used to refer to any important or respected bishop (Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:242, “There are documents referring to ‘Pope Cyprian’ of Carthage, or to ‘Pope Athanasius’ of Alexandria”).
 - Eusebius (270–340) in his *Ecclesiastical History* [note the mention of Paul]:

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- “After the martyrdom of Paul and Peter, Linus was the first appointed bishopric of the church of Rome” (III.ii).
- “Linus ... has already been declared to have been the first after Peter to be appointed to the bishopric of the Church in Rome” (III.iv).
- “At this time Clement was still governing the Romans and he, also, occupied the third place in the list of bishops in Rome after Paul and Peter; Linus was the first and after him Anencletus” (III.xx).
- Innocent I (402–417): “Took a step beyond, and in the Pelagian controversy ventured the bold assertion, that in the whole Christian world nothing should be decided without the cognizance of the Roman see, and that, especially in matters of faith, all bishops must turn to St. Peter” (Schaff, *History*, 3:315).
- Leo the Great (440–461)
 - The first pope in the truest sense is Leo I. “In him the idea of the papacy, as it were, became flesh and blood” (ibid.).
 - Leo certainly wielded political power in Rome. In 452 when Attila and his Huns invaded Italy, it was Leo who went to meet him. Likewise in 455 when the Vandals sacked the city, it was Leo who led the negotiations with the Vandal leader to save the city from burning (Shelley, *Church History*, 133).
 - However, in theological controversy Leo’s opinion was not accepted simply because he was the bishop of Rome. Although the bishops at the Council of Chalcedon in many ways honored Leo as the bishop of Rome, they gave the bishop of Constantinople (which was the New Rome in Constantine’s empire) equal authority with that of Leo (ibid., 138).
- The period between Gregory and Leo: “The first Leo and the first Gregory are the two greatest bishops of Rome in the first six centuries. Between them no important personage appears on the chair of Peter Leo thought and acted as an absolute monarch; Gregory as first among the patriarchs; but both under the full conviction that they were successors of Peter” (Schaff, *History*, 323).
- Gregory the Great (590)
 - Gregory’s own words on the Papacy: “Now I confidently say that whosoever calls himself, or desires to be called, Universal Priest, is in his elation the precursor of Antichrist, because he proudly puts himself above all others” (*A letter to Maricius Augustus*,” Book 7, Epistle 33, in Schaff, *Post-Nicene Fathers*, 12: 224–225).
 - “While Gregory protested high sounding titles, he claimed and exercised, as far as he had the opportunity and power, the oversight over the whole church of Christ” (Shelley, *Church History*, 167).
- **Select Fathers in the Fourth and Fifth Centuries**
 - **Athanasius (296–373)**

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- At the age of twenty-three wrote against the views of Arius, declaring them to be heresy
- Became Bishop of Alexandria on June 8, AD 328 (He was thirty).
- Was exiled five times (seventeen of his forty-five years as bishop were spent in exile).
- *On the Incarnation* was his most famous work.
- **John Chrysostom (347–407)**
 - His name means “golden mouth.”
 - Studied under the Libanius, who was the most outstanding orator of his day. “When [Libanus was] asked which of his students should succeed him in his professorship of rhetoric, Libanius replied, ‘It ought to have been John, had not the Christians stole him from us’ (Litfin, *Church Fathers*, 191).
 - “When John interpreted the Bible, he used a very different method than what we have already seen in Origen. Origen’s “Alexandrian” method of allegorization had a long history among the ancient Greeks, who used it to reinterpret their embarrassing mythology to find a more profound meaning. In the early church, Origen applied some of the same principles to the text of scripture A school of thought arose in opposition to the allegorical exegesis, and this school was centered in the Syrian city of Antioch. Therefore, modern scholars of early Christianity make a distinction between the ‘Alexandrian’ and Antiochene’ approaches to biblical interpretation” (ibid., 198).
- **Augustine (354–430)**
 - Father of orthodox theology and most important pre-Reformation theologian.
 - Council of Carthage (419) decided for Augustine’s views on grace and sin and condemned Pelagianism (see below).
 - He adopted amillennialism with the help of Ambrose’s allegorical method.
 - Highlights from Augustine’s *Confessions* (as translated by Chadwick):
 - “You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you” (I.i).
 - His reflection on stealing pears as a child: “I had no motive for my wickedness except wickedness itself. I was foul, and I loved it.” (II.iv).
 - Unhelpful, confusing sections: Seem to allude to praying for his mother’s sins after her death (IX.35). Baptismal regeneration? (IX.iii, iv, vi).
 - His conversion (see VIII.xii).
 - “Grant what you command, and command what you will” (X, xxix, xxx).
 - “Pelagius was a British monk...He came to Rome in 400 and was distressed at the state of conduct there. Feeling that there was need of more moral conduct he was shocked at the prayer of Augustine (above)” (Henry Bettenson, *Documents of the Christian Church*, 73).

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- “Pelagius, and his immediate followers, Coelestius and Julian, taught openly and explicitly that man’s moral character had received no injury from the fall, and that men were born now with much ability to do the will of God, and to discharge all the obligations incumbent upon them, as Adam” (Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:329).
- **Patrick (d. 493?)**
 - Patrick was born in Great Britain to godly parents, but was captured and made a slave in Ireland for six years. It was as a captive in Ireland that the Lord saved Him.
 - He escaped back to Britain, but a vision from God led him to return to Ireland.
 - Assessments of Patrick’s Christianity:
 - “The Christianity of Patrick was substantially that of Gaul and old Britain, i.e. Catholic, orthodox, monastic, ascetic, but independent of the Pope, and differing from Rome in the age of Gregory I in minor matters of polity and ritual. In his Confession he never mentions Rome or the Pope; he never appeals to tradition, and seems to recognize the Scriptures (including the Apocrypha) as the only authority in matters of faith.” (Schaff, *History*, 4:47).⁷
 - “Evangelical faith even then existed in the British islands in the person of this slave, and of some few Christians born again, like him from on high” (D’Aubigne, *History of the Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, 5:679.)
 - The Confession of St. Patrick:⁸
 - “I, Patrick, a sinner, a most simple countryman I did not, indeed, know the true God; and I was taken into captivity in Ireland with many thousands of people, according to our deserts, for quite drawn away from God, we did not keep his precepts, nor were we obedient to our priests who used to remind us of our salvation” (1; cf. 15: “I was not worthy”).
 - “And there [Ireland] the Lord opened my mind to an awareness of my unbelief, in order that, even so late, I might remember my transgressions and turn with all my heart to the Lord my God, who had regard for my insignificance and pitied my youth and ignorance” (2; Before his conversion he says he “remained in death and unbelief” 27).
 - “Before I was humbled I was like a stone lying in deep mire, and he that is mighty came and in his mercy raised me up and, indeed, lifted me high up and placed me on top of the wall. And from there I ought to shout out in

⁷ Schaff will go on to say that he quotes from the canonical Scriptures twenty-five times, but others scholars observe many more citations and allusions.

⁸ Available online in English: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/patrick/confession.i.html> and Latin, with manuscript annotations: <http://www.ucc.ie/celt/online/L201060/>.

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gratitude to the Lord for his great favours in this world and forever, that the mind of man cannot measure” (12).

- He once explained to his captors: “Be converted by faith with all your heart to my Lord, because nothing is impossible for him” (19).
- He speaks of Christ as, “He who gave his life for you” (24; cf. also section 55 for statements on Christ’s substitution).

• **The Recognition of the New Testament Canon in the Early Church**

- “A book is not the Word of God because it is accepted by the people of God. Rather, it was accepted by the people of God because it is the Word of God. That is, God gives the book its divine authority, not the people” (Geisler and Nix, *General Introduction to the Bible*, 210).
- “The writings that composed the Jewish Scriptures—now called the Old Testament—were fixed and had been so for several centuries prior to the coming of Jesus Christ” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 37).⁹
 - “It is true, our history has been written since Artaxerxes [464–423 BC] very particularly, but has not been esteemed of the like authority with the former by our forefathers, because there has not been an exact succession of prophets since that time” (Josephus, *Against Apion*, 1.41 in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 37).
- “Let us then serve Him in fear, and with all reverence, even as He Himself has commanded us, and as the apostles who preached the Gospel unto us, and the prophets who proclaimed beforehand the coming of the Lord” (Polycarp, *Letter to the Philippians*, 6.3).
- “We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us ... [he then lists several of the New Testament books]. If anyone does not agree to these truths, he despises the companions of the Lord; nay more, he despises Christ Himself the Lord; yea, he despises the Father also, and stands self-condemned, resisting and opposing his own salvation, as is the case with all heretics” (Irenaeus, *Against the Heresies*, 3.1.1, 2).
 - Irenaeus also speaks of “tradition which originates from the apostles” (3.2.2; 3.3.2).
 - “Throughout this treatise Irenaeus is content to use and cite a wide variety of New Testament books as Scripture and presumes his audience is familiar with them. He appeals to these books quite naturally and unapologetically, cites them by name, and provides no indication that this audience might be unaware of their existence or surprised by their authoritative role in the life of the church” (Michael Kruger, *The Question of Canon*, 159).
- “Two key criteria emerged to determine which writings to include in the canon:

⁹ The Catholic Church, in the Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent, 4th session (April 8, 1546), declared that the Apocrypha was a part of the Scripture in following the Vulgate and that anyone who didn’t agree was anathema. Interestingly, Jerome (translator of the Vulgate), identified the Apocryphal books as different from the true canon, and ended up including them in his translation at the encouragement of Augustine (cf. Allison, *Historical Theology*, 13).

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- (1) *apostolicity*: Does this writing have an apostle for its author (e.g., Paul’s letters, the gospels of Matthew and John)? If not, is an apostle associated with this writing (e.g., Mark’s gospel records the account of the apostle Peter)? (Irenaeus, *Against Heresies*, 3.1.1, ANF, I:414, “Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter”).
- (2) *antiquity*: Has the church historically recognized the voice of God speaking to His people in this writing?” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 42).
- The Muratorian Fragment (AD 170), named for the man who found the document.
 - Added to the twenty-seven books of our canon: Wisdom of Solomon, Revelation of Peter
 - Missing: Hebrews, James, 1 and 2 Peter, 3 John
 - “We should not use lack of *agreement* over the edges of canon as evidence for the lack of *existence* of a canon” (Kruger, *Canon*, 163).
- Theophilus of Antioch
 - Wrote his only surviving work *to Autolytus* around AD 177 (ibid., 164).
 - “Theophilus places the ‘Gospels’ on the same level of inspiration and authority as the Old Testament Prophets” and was clearly aware of Paul’s writings (ibid.).
 - “In the final analysis, the core of Theophilus’ collection of scriptural books is basically the same as that of Irenaeus; it included the four Gospels, the Pauline letters, and likely a few other books” (ibid.).
- Origen (mid-third century)
 - Identical to our present canon, but several books were disputed (e.g., Hebrews, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John).
- Eusebius of Caesarea (*Ecclesiastical History*, III.iii).
 - Accepted books: four gospels, Acts, thirteen letters of Paul, 1 John, 1 Peter, Revelation (may be spurious)
 - Disputed, yet known to most: James, 2 Peter, 2 and 3 John, Jude
 - He also had two other categories, ‘Spurious works,’ and ‘Absurd works,’ each with several works on the list.
- Athanasius’ Easter letter (AD 367):
 - Lists all twenty-seven books of the New Testament
 - “These are fountains of salvation Let no man add to these, neither let him take ought from these ... (Athanasius, “Selected Works, Letters,” *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, Vol. 4, 551–52). Athanasius’ list was officially endorsed at the Council of Hippo in AD 393).

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- **Justification by Faith Alone in the Early Church**¹⁰
 - Origen (185–254): “A man is justified by faith. The works of the law can make no contribution to this. Where there is no faith which might justify the believer, even if there are works of the law these are not based on the foundation of faith. Even if they are good in themselves they cannot justify the one who does them, because faith is lacking, and faith is the mark of those who are justified by God” (Origen, *Commentary on Romans*, 2.136).
 - Basil of Caesarea (329–379): “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord, that Christ has been made by God for us righteousness, wisdom, justification, redemption. This is perfect and pure boasting in God, when one is not proud on account of his own righteousness but knows that he is indeed unworthy of the true righteousness and is justified solely by faith in Christ” (Basil, “Homily on Humility,” 20.3).
 - Jerome (347–420): “We are saved by grace rather than works, for we can give God nothing in return for what he has bestowed on us” (Jerome, *Epistle to the Ephesians*, 1.2.1).
 - John Chrysostom (349–407): “God allowed his Son to suffer as if a condemned sinner, so that we might be delivered from the penalty of our sins. This is God’s righteousness, that we are not justified by works (for then they would have to be perfect, which is impossible), but by grace, in which case all our sin is removed” (John Chrysostom, *Homilies on the Epistles of Paul to the Corinthians*, 11.5).
- **The Trinity and the Person of Christ in the Ancient Church**¹¹
 - “After the completion of the NT, Christian writers saw it as their task to defend and explain how Jesus is one with God, while maintaining there is only one God” (Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 89).
 - **Irenaeus (130–200)** “stresses the oneness of God. The Word and Wisdom, the Son and the Spirit, are fully God, but yet in no way detract from the divine unity” (ibid., 96).
 - **Subordinationism**: Christ and the Spirit are lesser beings and subordinate to God.
 - **Modalism**: The Son and the Spirit are temporary manifestations of the one God
 - “Modalism was suppressed by the council of Antioch in 268, but the subordinationist question was still unresolved” (ibid., 109).
 - **Tertullian (160–225)** was “[t]he first to use *Trinitas* and *persona* ... [and] by demonstrating the real personal distinctions in the Trinity, he sets up a barrier to modalism” (ibid., 100–101).
 - **Origen (185–254)** is at times accused of being a subordinationist, however, he taught, contra Arius that, “There was not when he was not” of the Son (ibid., 105).

¹⁰ Adapted from Nathan Busenitz, “The Gospel According to the Church Fathers,” *The CrippleGate*, accessed March 25, 2013: <http://thecripplegate.com/reprise-the-gospel-according-to-the-church-fathers/>. Cf. also his seminar “Do We Have the Same Gospel as the Early Church?”: <http://media.shepherdsfellowship.org/2012/Seminar%20Session%20IV/2028.mp3>.

¹¹ Cf. Busenitz, “*Did Constantine Invent the Trinity? Why Rob Bell, The Da Vinci Code, and the Jehovah’s Witnesses Are Wrong?*” <http://media.shepherdsfellowship.org/2013/Seminar%20Session%20III/2019.mp3>.

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- **Sabellianism (3rd century):** “The only God, the Father in the OT, had become the Son in the NT, and sanctified the church as the Holy Spirit after Pentecost” (ibid., 108).
- **Arius (ca. 250–ca. 336):** “There was [a time] when the Son was not[*ἐν ποτε ἴσως οὐκ ἔν*].”
 - Arius was a propagandist and used songs to promote his heresy.
 - “The text John 10:30, where Jesus says ‘I and the Father are one,’ was taken to mean a unity in harmonious agreement of will, not identity of essence. Thus, for Arius, will is primary rather than essence” (ibid., 112).
- **First Council of Nicaea (325)**
 - Arius was condemned, his books were burned and he was exiled.
 - “Nicaea’s main achievement was to place on record once and for all that the being of the Son is identical to the being of the Father, dealing a mortal blow to subordinationism” (ibid., 117).
 - The Nicene Creed as it is known today is actually from Constantinople (381):
One Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only begotten, that is, from the essence of the Father [*ek tēs ousías tou patrós*].¹²
 - of the same essence (consubstantial with) of the Father [*homoousion tō patri*]
- Arianism and semi-Arianism gained ascendancy for a time in the church (AD 325–361)
- **Athanasius (296–373):** Taught that God is one being (ousia) and three persons (hypostasis) and the mutual indwelling of the three Persons.
- **The Cappadocians:** Basil the Great (330–379); Gregory of Nyssa (ca. 335/340–394/400); Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 330–391):
 - “[Clarified] the real, eternal, personal distinctions of the three and setting these in the context of their relations to each other. God is one undivided being, yet three persons in communion and union” (ibid., 165–164).
 - Nazianzus taught: Ingenerateness [Father]; Generateness [Son]; Procession [Spirit]
- **The First Council of Constantinople (381)**¹³
 - Added important statements emphasizing the deity of the Holy Spirit
 - “Thus Arianism and the kindred errors were forever destroyed in the Roman Empire, though kindred opinions continually reappear in other cases” (Schaff, *History*, 3:640).
- **The Council of Ephesus (431):** Condemned Nestorianism (Christ had two Persons)
- **The Council of Chalcedon (451):** Carefully defined orthodox Christology¹⁴
 - **“Reasonable soul”**—“Against Apollinaris, who denied that Christ had a ψυχὴ λογικὴ [*psuchè logikè*, reasonable soul] , and who reduced the Incarnation to the

¹² For a discussion on the development of terminology to describe the Trinity from Nicaea in 325 to Constantinople in 381 see Letham, *The Holy Trinity*, 115–122.

¹³ <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.iv.i.ii.ii.html>.

¹⁴ The Definition of Chalcedon: <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/creeds2.iv.i.iii.html>.

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assumption of a human body (σῶμα) [*sōma*] with an animal soul (ψυχὴ ἄλογος) [*psuchē álogos*], inhabited by the Divine Logos. But the rational spirit of man requires salvation as much as the body” (Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 2:62; Cf. Reymond, *Systematic Theology*, 602).

- **“One Substance”**—“Christ’s homoousia with the Father implies numerical unity, or identity of essence (God being one in being, or *monoousios*); Christ’s homoousia with men means only generic unity, or equality of nature” (Schaff, *Creeds*, 2:62).
- **“Two natures”**—Against Monophysitism and Eutychianism, which taught that Christ only had one nature
- **The Second Council of Constantinople (533)**: Monophysites made a partial victory ... even though their doctrine was still expected to be understood in light of Chalcedon.
- **The Third Council of Constantinople (680)**: Condemned Monothelitism (one will in Christ) as well as Pope Honorius I, who was a monothelite heretic (cf. Schaff, *History*, 4:491).

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The History of Medieval Christianity (590–1517)

- **General Introduction to Medieval Christianity** (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 4:5–14)
 - The theater of mediaeval Christianity is mainly Europe. In Western Asia and North Africa, the Cross was supplanted by the Crescent; and America only discovered in 1492.
 - Industrious priests and monks saved the treasures of classical literature, together with the Holy Scriptures and patristic writings from the wreck of the Roman Empire.
 - The church as a visible organization never had greater power over the minds of men. She controlled all departments of life from the cradle to the grave.
 - “This is what makes the riddle of the medieval age; that it was not one age but two ages. We look into the moods of some men, and it might be the Stone Age; and we look into the minds of other men, and they might be living in the Golden Age; in the most modern sort of Utopia” (G. K. Chesterton, *St. Thomas Aquinas*, 42).
- **The Place of the Middle Ages in Church History**
 - The Reformers did not reject all medieval theology. Luther and Calvin’s disparagement of scholastic theology can be partially attributed to their rejection of one particular type.
 - “Medieval Christianity is, on the one hand, a legitimate continuation and further development of ancient Catholicism; on the other hand a preparation for Protestantism” (Schaff, *History*, 4:11).
 - There was continuity: Trinity; Predestination; Anselm’s ideas on the atonement set the stage for the Reformers ideas on the atonement.
 - There was discontinuity:
 - Ancient Church: *how* did God become man?
 - Middle Ages: *why* did God become man?
 - The rediscovery of Aristotle in the 12th century transformed the intellectual culture in Europe (Trueman, lecture 1, “Medieval Church: Introduction”).¹⁵
 - Big issue of the day was determining how to relate to the early Church Fathers and their theology (Trueman, lecture 2, “The Church Fathers and Translation”).
- **The Papacy in the Middle Ages**
 - Pseudo-Isodorian Decretals (Pro-papacy document forged in the 9th century)
 - “The most colossal and effective fraud known in the history of ecclesiastical literature” (Schaff, *History*, 4:268).
 - “Both [Pope] Nicolas I (858–867) and the rest of Europe believed that the *Decretals* were genuine” (González, *Story*, 1:274).

¹⁵ These lectures were delivered at Westminster Theological Seminary and are freely available online: <https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/medievalchurch/id430337027>.

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- Described the whole hierarchy of the Roman church as something that was intact from the beginning, rather than something that developed over time (Schaff, *History*, 4:273).
- “The clergy is a divinely instituted, consecrated, and inviolable caste, mediating between God and the people The priests are the ‘*familiares Dei*,’ the ‘*spirituales*,’ the laity the ‘*carinales*.’ He who sins against them sins against God The *cathedra Petri* is the fountain of all power” (Schaff, *History*, 4:269).
- Popes often wielded their power over secular rulers, but at the same time, Popes were often chosen and controlled by rich nobles.
- On Christmas Day, 799 Pope Leo III crowned Charles the Great (Charlemagne), king of the Franks, holy Roman Emperor.
- Describing the papacy after the reign of John VIII (872–882) Gonzáles explains, “Popes were strangled, or died of starvation in the dungeons where they had been thrown by their successors. At times there were two popes, or even three, each claiming to be the true successor of Saint Peter” (Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:275).
- Benedict IX was made pope in 1033 (at the age of 12), he was driven out of Rome in 1045, and Italian nobles made Sylvester III pope. But, Benedict returned and began to rule again as Pope. However, after a time he sold the papal office for one thousand pounds of silver to Gregory VI. In the end Benedict refused to surrender and there were three so-called popes (*ibid.*, 267).
- Urban VI (crowned 1378) in Rome and Clement VII in Avignon, France (this started the Papal schism that lasted for thirty-nine years; cf. Shelley, *Church History*, 221).
- Hildebrand, Gregory VII (elected Pope 1073) had a clash with Emperor Henry IV. Both men attempted to do away with each other. The result was Henry doing public penance for three days in the snow.¹⁶
- In 1208 Pope Innocent III excommunicated King John of England from the church, which meant his subjects were no longer required to obey him as king. Eventually, therefore, he humbly submitted to the Pope.
- **All Dark and No Light?**
 - We would be foolish to imagine that between the Fathers and the Reformers there was a gap of roughly 1,000 years without any representatives of Christian orthodoxy.
 - “There are very considerable difficulties in ascertaining accurately the doctrinal views of some of these alleged witnesses for the truth during the middle ages, as in most cases we have scarcely any means of knowing what they believed and taught, except from Popish writers, their enemies and persecutors; and we may be pretty confident that the men who murdered them would not scruple to calumniate them [make knowingly or maliciously false statements about them]” (Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 1:451).

¹⁶ Hildebrand also tried to reform the papacy (cf. Schaff, *History*, 5:9ff).

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Fourth Period: From Gregory I to Hildebrand, or Gregory VII (AD 590–1049)

• **General Introduction to the Period**

- Medieval “missions”—“The medieval Christianization was a conversion of nations under the command of their leaders It was a conversion not to the primary Christianity of inspired apostles, as laid down in the New Testament, but to the secondary Christianity of ecclesiastical tradition as taught by the fathers, monks and pope” (Schaff, *History*, 4:18).
- Muhammed and Islamic expansion
- Doctrinal Controversies: Procession of the Holy Spirit; Monotheletism and Adoptionism; the Eucharist; Predestination Controversy
- The Second Council of Nicaea (AD 787) sanctioned a limited worship of images.¹⁷

• **Mohammed (570–632)**

- For a brief overview of Mohammed’s life, see chapter 1 in James White, *What Every Christian Needs to Know about the Qur’an* (Bethany House, 2013).
- “Mohammed claimed that he was not preaching a new religion, but simply the culmination of what God had revealed in the Hebrew prophets and in Jesus, who was a great prophet, although not divine as Christians claimed” (González, *Story*, 1:249).
- In AD 622 Mohammed fled from Mecca to Medina, where he founded the first Islamic community, which followed his guidelines in every sphere of life.
- “By his death in 632, a goodly part of Arabia was in Moslem hands” (ibid.).
- Over the next 100 years (until 732) the Islamic expansion took Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa. The Church in these regions was severely hurt or totally destroyed.

• **Gottschalk (804–868/9)**

- Taught limited atonement (Schaff, *History*, 4:528)
- Taught a strong version of double predestination based on his understanding of divine immutability, which he considered a legitimate development from Augustine¹⁸
- A vigorous evangelist
- The church always held Augustine in high esteem, but they never really bought into his teaching on sin, grace, and predestination.
- An assessment of his teaching on predestination:
 - “He held a two-fold predestination of the elect to salvation, and of the reprobate to perdition; not in the sense of two separate predestinations, but one predestination with two sides (*gemina*, i.e. *bipartita*), a positive side (election) and a negative side

¹⁷ “Occupies the lowest grade among the seven ecumenical synods” (Schaff, *History*, 4:462).

¹⁸ Augustine says this about God’s election, rooting the predestination to righteousness in nothing man does, but the predestination to perdition in man’s works: “Therefore the election obtained what it obtained gratuitously; there preceded none of those things which they might first give, and it should be given to them again. He saved them for nothing. But to the rest who were blinded, as is there plainly declared, it was done in recompense” (Augustine, “On the Predestination of the Saints,” *The Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers*, 5:504).

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(reprobation). He could not conceive of the one without the other; but he did not teach a predestination of the sinner to sin, which would make God the author of sin” (Schaff, *History*, 4:531).

- “He spoke of two redemptions, one common to the elect and the reprobate, another proper and special for the elect only” (ibid., 4:531–532).
- Berkhof sees Gottschalk as returning to a more careful and consistent Augustinian view of predestination. This is in contrast to Gregory the Great’s modified Augustinianism, which roots predestination in divine foreknowledge (Louis Berkhof, *The History of Christian Doctrines*, 141–142).
- His shorter confession is available online.¹⁹
- Rejected the doctrine of transubstantiation along with Ratramnus.

• **Ratramnus (9th century)**

- A monk who defended Gottschalk’s view of predestination in his work on predestination (*De praedestinatione Dei*).
- Argued against Radbertus’ view of transubstantiation (*De corpore et sanguine Domini*), following Augustine. Eventually the transubstantiation view, relying heavily upon Ambrose, won the day.
 - “Ratramnus addressed the key question: ‘whether that very body which was born of Mary, suffered, died, and was buried, and which sits at the right hand of the Father is daily eaten in the church by the mouth of the faithful through the mystery of the sacraments.’ Ratramnus replied that ‘they are not the same.’ Rather, there is a ‘a great difference between’ the historical body of Christ—‘the real flesh of Christ’—and the Eucharistic body—‘the sacrament of the real flesh.’ So as not to be misunderstood, however, Ratramnus noted that ‘it should not be supposed that in the mystery of the sacrament either the body of the Lord or his blood is not received by the faithful.’ But that this is a figure of the body and the blood in the Eucharist, not the reality of the empirical body and blood of the historical Jesus Christ” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 642).
 - In the 11th century the same controversy came up again, this time with Berengar of Tours arguing against Transubstantiation.
 - The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 “officially ruled” in favor of transubstantiation.

• **East and West Split (AD 1054)**

- Bishop of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other.
- The language divide: Latin in the West and Greek in the East; West typically appealed to Latin Fathers, and East to Greek Fathers.

¹⁹ Gottschalk of Orbais, *Shorter Confession*, translated by Victor Genke (2003, PL 121, Col. 347–350), http://pages.uoregon.edu/sshoemak/322/Texts/gottschalk_of_orbais.htm.

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- General Issues over which East and West disagreed:
 - West believed in the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father and the Son (*Filioque: 'and the Son'*), the East in the procession of the Spirit from the Father only.
 - East did not acknowledge the Pope, but saw five Patriarchs with equal authority.
 - East denied the immaculate conception of Mary and allowed lower clergy to marry.

Fifth Period: The Church under the papal hierarchy, and the scholastic theology (AD 1049–1294)

- **General Introduction to the Period** (Schaff, *History*, 5:3–4)
 - The classical age of Latin Christianity: the age of the papal theocracy, aiming to control the German Empire and the kingdoms of France, Spain, and England.
 - Rise of the great Mendicant orders
 - The crusades and the conquest and loss of the Holy Land.
 - It was the age of scholastic philosophy and theology.
 - The Inquisition was established, involving the theory of the persecution of Jews and heretics as a divine right, and carrying it into execution in awful scenes of torture and blood.
- **Scholasticism (11th–16th centuries)** (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 753)
 - A scholarly approach and method employed by many theologians during the latter part of the medieval period, the term being derived from the Latin *scholasticus*, meaning “learned.”
 - As an approach, it joined together Christian theology and philosophy (especially that of Aristotle), seeking to find compatibility between faith and reason.
 - As a method, it involved composing lists of contradictory statements from several authoritative sources and applying logic to find their agreement.
 - The main figures associated with scholasticism are Anselm, Peter Abelard, Duns Scotus, William of Ockham, Bonaventura, and Thomas Aquinas.²⁰
- **Crusades**
 - Most recognize seven crusades
 - “Driven by religion fervor, love of adventure, and dreams of personal profit, crusaders from western Europe for 200 years attempted to expel the Muslims from the Holy Land” (Shelley, *Church History*, 186).
 - The Crusades began in part in response to the difficulty pilgrims were having making their way from Europe to the Holy Land.
 - First Crusade (1095) broke out under Pope Urban II’s encouragement
 - The cry was *Deus Volt!* (God wills it!)
 - Pope Urban promised plenary indulgences to those who went.

²⁰ On the connection between Luther and Scholastic theology see Martin Luther, “Disputation Against Scholastic Theology” and “Heidelberg Disputation,” in *Career of the Reformer: I*, American Edition, Vol. 31 of *Luther’s Works* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1957); and Carl Trueman, *Luther on the Christian Life* (Wheaton: Crossway, 2015), 81ff.

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- Horrible atrocities were involved (ibid., 188; Shelley even speaks of cannibalism).
- There were even so called “children’s crusades” in 1212. 30,000 children were involved and many were sold into slavery (Schaff, *History*, 5:266–268; Gonzáles, *Story*, 1:296).
- **Anselm of Canterbury (1033–1109)²¹**
 - “With Anselm the systematic study of the doctrine of the atonement began There was one great thinker during the Middle Ages who not only reproduced the Augustinian anthropology, but also made a positive contribution to it, namely, Anselm of Canterbury” (Berkof, *Theology of Christian Doctrine*, 171 and 142).
 - Uses logic to explore the context of what he already believes. He provides a proof for the existence of God, in a time when there really was no such thing as an atheist.
 - The ontological argument for God’s existence in the *Proslogium*.
 - “There is, then, so truly a being than which nothing greater can be conceived to exist, that it cannot even be conceived not to exist; and this being you are, O Lord, our God” (III).
 - “So truly, therefore, do you exist, O Lord, my God, that you can not be conceived not to exist; and rightly. For, if a mind could conceive of a being better than you, the creature would rise above the Creator; and this is most absurd. And, indeed, whatever else there is, except you alone, can be conceived not to exist. To you alone, therefore, it belongs to exist more truly than all other beings, and hence in a higher degree than all others” (III).
 - The monk Gaunilo critiqued Anselm, saying his argument could be used to prove anything such as the perfect Island (cf. Frame, *History of Western Philosophy*, 136).
 - *Cur Deus Homo* (Why God Became Man)
 - The question: “For what cause or necessity, in sooth, God became man, and by his own death, as we believe and affirm, restored life to the world; when he might have done this, by means of some other being, angelic or human, or merely by his will” (I.I).
 - He rejected common theories: Ransom to Satan; Atonement only as an example
 - His explanation of the atonement (often called the satisfaction theory) (adapted from Berkof, *Theology of Christian Doctrine*, 172):
 - He finds the ultimate ground for the atonement in the honor of God. Man, who is obligated to honor God, did not honor God and thus contracted a debt. “God was robbed of his honor and this must be restored some way.”
 - Two ways to vindicate divine honor: (1) punishment; (2) satisfaction. Punishment would the ruin of the human race, so God chose satisfaction

²¹ Cf. Carl Trueman, *Medieval Church 3: Anselm*, <https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/medievalchurch/id430337027>.

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- The way of satisfaction includes two things: (1) willing obedience to God; (2) amends for the insult to God’s honor by paying something above the actual debt. “But since even the smallest sin, as committed against an infinite God, outweighs the whole world and all that is not God, and the amends must be proportionate, it follows that these are beyond the power of man.”
- The voluntary gift of the God-man was the only way for God’s honor to be satisfied. As Christ voluntarily, and not necessarily died, He brought abundant glory and honor to God and reward which He did not need, but gives to man.
- The good (ibid., 173):
 - “Its real value lies in the fact that it establishes the objective character of the atonement. And bases its necessity on the immutable nature of God, which makes it impossible that He should permit the violation of His honor to go unpunished.”
- The bad (ibid., 174–175): Falls short of orthodox doctrine of penal substitution²²
 - “(a) it erroneously represents punishment and satisfaction as alternatives from which God could choose.”
 - “(b) it has no place for the idea that in His suffering Christ endured the penalty of sin, since it regards the sufferings of Christ as a voluntary tribute to the honor of God, as a superfluous merit which served to compensate the demerit of others ... Catholic idea of penance applied to the work of Christ.”
 - (c) overly influenced by the laws of feudalism
 - (d) Denies the atoning significance of his life.
 - (e) It falls short of the full-orbed application of the merits of Christ to the sinner, emphasizing only the external.
- **Waldensians**
 - Beginnings of the movement
 - Southern France was their first home. Italy still has Waldensian churches, although the denomination is now quite liberal.
 - Derive their name from Peter Waldo, who died sometime before 1218.²³
 - Peter has a conversion story like Anthony of Egypt. He sold all he had and began to live a simple life on the “plain precepts of the Bible” (Schaff, *History*, 5:495).
 - They were not licensed to preach by the local bishops.

²² Frame, *A History of Western Philosophy and Theology*, 140: “So Anselm is certainly thinking in terms of sin and punishment. In chapter 14, he says that ‘the honor of God exists in the punishment of the wicked’... . So although he does not say explicitly that ‘Jesus paid the penalty we deserved,’ the idea of penal substitution is certainly implicit in his formulations. I wish he had put that more pointedly.”

²³ Some argue that even before Waldo there was a movement of orthodox believers in the valleys of the Alps cf. William Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, 456–57.

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- Assessments of the Movement
 - “They were the strictly biblical sect of the Middle Ages” (ibid., 5:493).
 - No doctrine of justification by faith in their extant writings.
 - Distinguishing principles of the early Waldensians (ibid., 5:502):
 - (1) They thought they ought to obey God rather than man. Rome took this to mean that they didn’t have to submit to the Pope and [other] leaders, and on this point they were often persecuted.
 - (2) The authority of the Scriptures and their popular use by the laity
 - (3) The importance of preaching and the right of laymen to preach
 - Some denied infant baptism, purgatory, and prayers for the dead.
 - “Their doctrines from the twelfth century downwards, were substantially those now held by the Protestant churches” (Cunningham, *Historical Theology*, Vol. 1, 452, 457)
 - “They were pledged to the three monastic vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They refused to accept Purgatory ... [and the worship of the saints and Mary]. They retained confession, but the formula of absolution was not: ‘I absolve thee,’ but ‘May God absolve thee from all sin.’ ... They held capital punishment to be contrary to the Scripture, and refused to take an oath. ... The order of their worship was very simple. They read or recited the Word of God, which they knew for the greater part by heart, and expounded it in a practical and popular manner. ... [T]hey never administered the sacraments; when these were needed, they had recourse to the Roman Catholic priests” (Giovanni Luzzi, *The Struggle for Christian Truth in Italy*, 152–53).
 - In 1270 the following was written by their opponents: “And because they [The Waldensians] presumed to interpret the words of the gospel in a sense of their own, not perceiving that there were any other, they said that the entire gospel ought to be obeyed literally. And they boasted that they wished to do this, and that they only were the true imitators of Christ This was their first heresy, contempt of the power of the church In their zeal they led many others astray along with them. They teach even little girls the words of the Gospels and the Epistles, so that they may be trained in error from their childhood They teach their docile and fluent disciples to repeat the word of the Gospel and the sayings of the apostles ... by heart, in their common language, so that they may know how to teach others and lead the faithful astray” (David of Augsburg, “On the Waldensians of Bavaria, 1270” in Allison, *Historical Theology*, 127).
- **Thomas Aquinas (1226–1274)**
 - “He was born in the purple; almost literally on the hem of the imperial purple; for his own cousin was the Holy Roman Emperor” (Chesterton, *Aquinas*, 29). His father, a rich Count with a castle, planned to make Thomas a monk and eventually the abbot of a nearby monastery. Much to the dismay of his family (his brothers tried to lock him in a tower), he

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became “one of the Begging Friars, of the new order founded by Dominic the Spaniard” (ibid., 39).

- “It was Aquinas who baptised Aristotle” (ibid., 92). “It [an approach to Christianity influenced by Plato] thought of God too exclusively as a Spirit who purifies or a Saviour who redeems; and too little as a Creator who creates. That is why men like Aquinas thought it right to correct Plato by an appeal to Aristotle; Aristotle who took things as he found them, just as Aquinas accepted things as God created them” (ibid., 62).
- “It is impossible to overestimate his importance for the story of Christian theology and especially for the story of Roman Catholic theology” (Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology*, 331).
 - Angelic Doctor (1323); Universal Doctor of the Church (1567 Council of Trent); “In 1879 Pope Leo XIII declared Thomism (Aquinas’ teachings) to be eternally valid for the Roman Catholic Church” (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 756; Olson, *Christian Theology*, 331).
 - “While most of the Reformers respected Aquinas as a great genius, they regarded his theology as a serious diversion away from the biblical faith into philosophical speculation under the spell of Aristotelian philosophy” (Olson, *Christian Theology*, 335).
- Most important work was *Summa Theologica*, which was his systematic theology (ibid., 334).
 - Four-fold sense of Scripture: *literal, allegorical, tropological, analogical*—these were argued for on a basis similar to the Christological argument of both the Redemptive-Historical Hermeneutic and the Canonical Interpretation (Henri de Lubac, *Medieval Exegesis: The Four Senses of Scripture*, 1:225–6, 261–67).
 - Aquinas, with the help of Aristotelian philosophy, set forth the definitive Catholic explanation of transubstantiation:
 - “For it is evident that every agent acts according as it is in act. But every created agent is limited in its act, as being of a determinate genus and species: and consequently the action of every created agent bears upon some determinate act. Now the determination of everything in actual existence comes from its form. Consequently, no natural or created agent can act except by changing the form in something; and on this account every change made according to nature’s laws is a formal change. But God is infinite act, as stated in I, 7, 1; 26, 2; hence His action extends to the whole nature of being. Therefore He can work not only formal conversion, so that diverse forms succeed each other in the same subject; but also the change of all being, so that, to wit, the whole substance of one thing be changed into the whole substance of another. And this is done by Divine power in this sacrament; for the whole substance of the bread is changed into the whole substance of Christ’s body, and the whole substance of the wine into the whole substance

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of Christ's blood. Hence this is not a formal, but a substantial conversion; nor is it a kind of natural movement: but, with a name of its own, it can be called "transubstantiation" (Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, pt. 3, q. 75, art. 4: <http://www.newadvent.org/summa/4075.htm>).

- For an article that lays out some of the specific ways Aquinas' view of justification differs from the biblical view expressed by the Reformers see Reymond's critique of Gerstner: Robert L. Reymond, "Dr. John H. Gerstner on Thomas Aquinas as a Protestant" *WTJ* 59:1 (Spring 1997).

Sixth Period: The decay of mediaeval Catholicism, and the preparatory movements for the Reformation (AD 1294–1517)

- **General Introduction to the Period** (Schaff, *History*, 6:1–4)
 - The power of the papacy, which had asserted infallibility of judgment and dominion over all departments of human life, was undermined by the mistakes, pretensions, and worldliness of the papacy itself.
 - The religious unrest found expression in Bradwardine, Wycliffe and Huss.
 - The Renaissance, or the revival of classical culture, unshackled the minds of men.
 - The last period of the Middle Ages was a period of intellectual discontent, of self-introspection, a period of preparation for what was to come.
- **The State of Roman Catholicism**
 - "The following doctrines of the Roman Church must be kept in mind if we want a real picture of Catholicism at the time of Boniface VIII (1300 A.D.):
 - "(a) Meritoriousness of external work.—The doctrine of grace was forgotten and the merit of work, including prayers to the dead and prayers for the dead, was stressed. Asceticism with celibacy or virginity was esteemed the highest type of life.
 - "(b) Sacramentalism.—The simple doctrine of the ordinances as symbols of grace has been changed to the Roman idea of sacramentalism, the doctrine that Divine grace is granted through external means and that these means are controlled by the church.
 - "(c) The Pope is God's representative on earth; the vicar of Christ; head of the church.
 - "(d) The Pope and the clergy make up the visible church. The ordinary members exist for the purpose of being ruled.
 - "(e) The Pope is the ultimate judge in religious matters, but he is also the ultimate judge in secular matters since he is the ruler of all civil governments, of emperors, kings and princes. Civil governments exist only by papal permission.
 - "(f) Every law, even the law of God, may be set aside if the church should find it necessary. Denying the prerogative of the Roman Church is heresy, and the church must deal with it as such. It was against doctrines like these that so many earnest

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- people protested” (Peder Stiansen, “Church Reform in the Late Middle Ages,” [Part 1] *BibSac* 105 no. 418 (April 1948): 218).
- In 1300 Boniface issued the bull *Antiquorum Habet Fida Relatio* to institute the first Year of Jubilee, promising all who came to Rome plenary indulgence:
 - “We, confiding in the mercy of Almighty God, in the merits and power of these His Apostles, in the counsel of our brethren, and in the plenitude of the Apostolic authority, grant to all those who being truly penitent and confessing their sins, shall reverently visit these Basilicas in the present year 1300, commencing from the festival of the Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, which has just been celebrated, and to all who being truly penitent, and shall confess their sins, and shall approach these Basilicas each succeeding hundredth year, not only a full and copious, but the most full pardon of all their sins” (*non solum plenam, et largiorem immo plenissimam omnium suorum concedemus, et concedimus veniam peccatorum*).²⁴
 - “In one month two hundred thousand pilgrims visited Rome. All these strangers brought rich offerings; and the popes and the Romans saw their coffers replenished. Roman avarice soon fixed each Jubilee at fifty, then at thirty-three, and last at twenty-five years’ interval” (D’Aubigné, *Reformation*, I:II).
 - “In 1302 A.D., Boniface VIII had issued a bull ‘Unam Sanctum,’ the boldest claim ever made by anybody sitting in the bishop’s chair in Rome. Boniface began by quoting Jeremiah 1:10 ... [and] declared that there is only one church, outside of which there is no salvation” (Stiansen, “Church Reform,” 219; cf. his explanation about three popes).
 - The last lines read: “Further, we declare, say, define and pronounce it to be altogether necessary for salvation for every human creature that he be subject to the Roman pontiff” (“The Bull of Boniface VIII., *Unam Sanctam*, Nov. 18, 1302,” in Schaff, *Creeds*, 2:605).
 - **John Wycliffe (1324–1384)**
 - Basic biography (from Daniell, *The Bible in English*, 70–76):
 - 1361—Became a fellow at Merton College, Oxford at thirty-seven where he was an outstanding scholastic philosopher, studying and teaching logic and metaphysics.
 - 1377—Pope Gregory XI condemns Wycliffe in five papal bulls. He is then summoned to answer charges of heresy found in his work *On Civil Dominion*.
 - 1382—His English translation of the entire Bible is completed. His followers were called ‘Lollards’ for the first time (a term of abuse) in a sermon. Following the sermon his works were denounced as heretical.

²⁴ Pope Francis declared 2016 an extraordinary year of Jubilee. In the bull *Misericordiae Vultus* he writes: “Mary attests that the mercy of the Son of God knows no bounds and extends to everyone, without exception. Let us address her in the words of the Salve Regina, a prayer ever ancient and ever new, so that she may never tire of turning her merciful eyes upon us, and make us worthy to contemplate the face of mercy, her Son Jesus.”

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- 1384—Died of stroke. He was later condemned at the council of Constance (1415). His remains were dug up and burned and his ashes were thrown in the River Swift (1428).
- Wycliffe’s Bible
 - “It seems unlikely that Wyclif himself, pen in hand, translated any of ‘his’ Bible. But that the manuscripts were the work of men close to him, influenced by him, inspired by his teaching and preaching, there can be no doubt” (ibid., 73).
 - The Bibles associated with Wycliffe were translated from the Latin Vulgate.
- Assessment of his teaching (adapted from Schaff, *History*, 6:346).
 - He exalted preaching and insisted all people have access to the Scriptures.
 - He demanded the purity of the clergy and taught all men could marry.
 - He defined the Church as the congregation of the elect; taught that the Pope is not essential to the church.
 - Proved that transubstantiation was unbiblical.
 - Wycliffe taught that justification is by faith alone: “that faith is the basis of the justification of man unto God” (*De Veritate Sacrae Scripturae*, i.219). The doctrine of merit is denied, and Christ’s mediation is made all-sufficient. He approached close to the Reformers when he pronounced “faith the supreme theology,”—*fides est summa theologia*—and only through the Scriptures can one become a Christian.
- Common themes in his writings:²⁵
 - The gospel:
 - “[Every man] should have great and lasting sorrow for his sin, and a mind intent on Christ’s righteousness and wisdom, and on Christ’s passion, death, and mercy to forgive sin on true repentance; and let each man put his full trust in God’s mercy, and in his own good life, and not in false pardons, nor in vanities, which men invent to avail after men’s death for love of money, for such things avail not any man, but destroy those who trust in them” (*De Episcoporum Erroribus*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises of John De Wycliffe*, 45; cf. *Expositio Decalogi*, 5).
 - “Therefore Christ especially commanded his apostles and disciples to preach the Gospel, and not to shut themselves up in cloisters or churches to pray as some men” (*Speculum de Antichristo*, Vaughn, *Tract and Treatises*, 23; cf. *De Conversatione Ecclesiasticorum*, 13; *Of Feigned Contemplative Life*, 49).
 - Against the excesses of the Pope and the clergy:

²⁵ His work *Of the Leaven of the Pharisees* written in 1383 touches on all of these topics and can be found in: F. D. Matthew, *The English Works of Wyclif Hitherto Unprinted* (London, Trubner and Company, 1880); http://lollardsociety.org/pdfs/Matthew_EngWorksWyclif.pdf.

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- “These wicked prelates sell Christian men’s souls to Satan for money, for which souls Christ shed his precious heart’s-blood - upon the cross ... and thus almost all men are conquered to the fiend, and these prelates show themselves very Antichrists, procurators of Satan, and traitors to Jesus Christ and his people” (Vaughn, *De Conversatione Ecclesiasticorum*, 15).²⁶
- “[People often claim] that there is nothing lawful among Christian men without leave of the bishop of Rome, though he be Antichrist, full of simony and heresy. For commonly, of all priests he is the most contrary to Christ, both in life and teaching ; and he maintaineth more sin, by privileges, excommunications, and long pleas; and he is most proud against Christ’s meekness, and most covetous of worldly goods and lordships” (ibid., 20).
- “Christian men should give more heed to Christ’s Gospel and his life, than to any bulls from the sinful bishops of this world, or else they forsake Christ, and take Antichrist and Satan for their chief governor” (*Good Preaching Priests*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 30).
- Against indulgences:
 - He calls the whole system of indulgences, and pardons “a subtle merchandise of Antichrist’s clerks, to magnify their counterfeit power, and to get worldly goods, and to cause men not to dread sin” (Vaughn, *De Conversatione Ecclesiasticorum* , 19).
 - “Marvelous it is that any sinful fool dare grant anything on the merit of saints, for all that ever any saint did may not bring a soul to heaven without the grace and might of Christ’s passion In that passion, it is maintained ‘all merits that are needful’ will be found, and the judgment of God hereafter will not be found to have been influenced by the caprice or the biddings of man” (ibid).
- Emphasis on the Scriptures (‘Holy Writ’):
 - At the end of his tract *Poor Preaching Priests* he adds this, “If any man can prove by Holy Writ or reason that these points are false, poor priests will meekly amend them, and heartily pray all good men to help them in the true cause, for the honour of God, the health of their souls, and the salvation of Christian nations” (*Good Preaching Priests*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 29).
 - “True men say that in this life, without special revelation, men know not what sin is venial and what is deadly, and that these terms venial and deadly, are inventions of new men, without authority of Holy Writ” (*De Episcoporum Erroribus*, Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 45).

²⁶ Wycliffe provides the following biblical basis for his sharp rebukes: “ Christ and his apostles reprovved Pharisees, and Herod, and heretics, in their absence and before the people, as the Gospels and Epistles witness, and this was for our example, to be followed with charity and discretion” (Vaughn, *Tracts and Treatises*, 21).

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- Cf. his work *How Antichrist and His Clerks Travail to Destroy Holy Writ, and to Make Christian men Unstable in the Faith, and to Set their Ground in Devils of Hell*.
- **John Huss (1372–1415)** (adapted from Allison, *Historical Theology*, 748)
 - Professor of philosophy at the University of Prague and preacher in the main church.
 - Drew heavily upon John Wycliffe:
 - “Teacher never had a more devoted pupil than the English Reformer had in Huss. The first three chapters of *De ecclesia* [*‘On the Church,’ his major work*] are little more than a series of extracts from Wycliff’s treatise on the Church” (Schaff, *History*, 6:370).
 - Attacked clerical corruption in the Catholic Church
 - Criticized transubstantiation
 - Denounced some popes as heretics
 - He was excommunicated by the church, and his followers were placed under an interdict. Although he was promised safe travel to the Council of Constance, Huss was burned at the stake there in 1415. The Hussite movement spread throughout Bohemia.
 - “Huss died for his advocacy of Wycliffism. The sentence passed by the council coupled the two names together” (Schaff, *History*, 6:383).
 - “On arriving at the execution-ground . . . Huss knelt and prayed. For the last time the marshal of the empire asked him if he would recant to save his life. Said Huss: ‘God is my witness that the evidence against me is false. I have never thought nor preached except with the one intention of winning men, if possible, from their sins. In the truth of the Gospel I have written, taught and preached; today I will gladly die’ (Shelley, *Church History*, 232).
- **Erasmus (1466–1536)**
 - Erasmus was the “Prince of Humanists” (González, *Story*, 2:10).
 - He published the first printed edition of the Greek New Testament, and in one way or another managed to influence each of the major Reformers.
 - He wrote *The Praise of Folly*, a scathing satirical attack on the excesses of Roman clergy.
 - The Greek New Testament (1516)
 - His work on the New Testament, drawing from several manuscripts was “ground breaking,” and proved to be in many ways the genesis of modern textual criticism (cf. John D. Currid, *Calvin and the Biblical Languages*, 66).
 - Erasmus’ New Testament continued to be the standard Greek Text with few deviations for hundreds of years to come.
 - Though Erasmus never joined Luther, the second edition of his New Testament was the basis of Luther’s German translation.
 - Tyndale’s English translation was based on Erasmus. In addition Erasmus’ text was the basis for the famous Geneva Bible (James White “Erasmus of Rotterdam: His New Testament and Its Importance.,” <http://vintage.aomin.org/erasmus.html>).

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- It is also almost sure that Calvin “knew and used Erasmus in more than one edition [of his Greek New Testament].” (T. H. L. Parker, *John Calvin*, 101).
- Ulrich Zwingli was a great admirer of Erasmus (Estep, *The Anabaptist Story*, 11).
- Erasmus respected the Anabaptists more than any other of the groups that broke from Rome (cf. Roland H. Bainton, *Erasmus of Christendom*, 261).
- Erasmus and the Reformers
 - Although Erasmus was initially counted in with the Reformers, His love of learning, his desires for independence and ‘peace,’ did not allow him to break from Rome.
 - To show his commitment to Rome, he wrote *Diatribes on the Freedom of the Will* against Luther. Luther vigorously responded with his *The Bondage of the Will*.
 - “Luther believed that the human will was enslaved, totally unable, apart from grace, to love or serve God. But Erasmus considered this a dangerous doctrine since it threatened to relieve man of his moral responsibility. What Luther regarded as basic to biblical religion, Erasmus dismissed in the name of scholarship” (Shelley, *Church History*, 313).
 - Luther’s response to Erasmus includes these phrases: “I thought it outrageous to convey material of so low a quality in the trappings of such rare eloquence; it is like using gold or silver dishes to carry garden rubbish or dung” and “Your thoughts of God are too human” (Martin Luther, *The Bondage of the Will*, trans. J. I. Packer and O. R. Johnston: 63, 87).

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The History of Modern Christianity: 1517–Present Day

Seventh Period: The Evangelical Reformation and the Roman Catholic Reaction: From Luther to the Treaty of Westphalia (1517–1648)

• **General Introduction to the Period**

- “The Reformation of the sixteenth century is, next to the introduction of Christianity, the greatest event in history” (Schaff, *History*, 7:1).
- “The Reformation was preceded and necessitated by the corruptions of the papacy, the decline of monasticism and scholastic theology, the growth of mysticism, the revival of letters, the resurrection of the Greek and Roman classics, the invention of the printing press, the discovery of a new world, the publication of the Greek Testament, the general spirit of enquiry, the striving after national independence and personal freedom” (ibid., 7:2).
- “To set up a mediatorial caste between God and man—to obtain by works, by penance, and by money, the salvation which is the free gift of God—such is Popery. To open to all, through Jesus Christ, without any human mediator, without that power which calls itself the Church, free access to the great boon of eternal life which God offers to man—such is Christianity and the Reformation” (D’Aubigné, *History of the Reformation*, I:II).

• **The Excesses of Relics As an Example of the Need for Reform in Calvin’s Satirical: *Admonition, Showing the Advantages that Christendom Might Derive from an Inventory of Relics, 1543*:²⁷**

- “And yet his natural blood is exhibited in more than a hundred places I leave every man to judge what certainty can be had on such a subject, and whether it be not a manifest falsehood to say that the blood of Christ has been found seven or eight hundred years after his death, and in such quantities as to be diffused over the whole world, and this without any mention of it whatever in the ancient Church” (296).
- “There is no town, however small, which has not some morsel of it [the cross], and this not only in the principal cathedral church of the district, but also in parish churches If all the pieces which could be found were collected into a heap, they would form a good ship-load, though the gospel testifies, that a single individual was able to carry it” (301–302).
- “In regard to the crown of thorns, it would seem that its twigs had been planted that they might grow again. Otherwise I know not how it could have attained to such a size” (304).

²⁷ John Calvin, “Admonition, Showing the Advantages that Christendom Might Derive from an Inventory of Relics,” in *Selected Works of John Calvin: Tracts and Letters* (Reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983); Reymond, *Calvin*, 89–90, explains, “It did not seem to bother the fathers of Trent that the same object was venerated in different places. Jean Ferrand, the seventeenth-century Jesuit, even contended that such objects as the wood of the cross and the crown of thorns were so necessary for devotion to God, that God arranged their miraculous replication;” Fredrick the Wise, the ruler in Wittenberg where Luther lived, had a collection of relics that included 19,013 holy bones, “Those who viewed these relics on the designated day and made the stipulated contributions might receive from the pope indulgences for the reduction of purgatory, either for themselves or others, to the extent of 1,902,202 years and 270 days” (Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 53).

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- “The piece of broiled fish which Peter offered to him when he appeared on the sea-shore. It must have been wondrously well salted if it has kept for such a long series of ages! But, jesting apart, is it supposable that the apostles made relics of what they had actually prepared for dinner? Whoever does not perceive that the whole matter is an open mockery of God, I must leave as unworthy of being further addressed on the subject” (313).
- **Martin Luther (1483–1546)**
 - **July 2, 1505:** Luther vows to become a monk. “He was then twenty-one and a student at the University of Erfurt. As he returned to school after a visit with his parents, sudden lightning struck him to earth. In that single flash he saw the denouement of the drama of existence. There was God the all-terrible, Christ the inexorable, and all the leering fiends springing from their lurking places. It was no wonder that he cried out to his father’s saint, patroness of miners, ‘St. Anne help me! I will become a monk!’” (Bainton, *Here I Stand*, 25).
 - **November 1510:** Luther begins his trip to Rome. In Rome he sees first-hand the excesses of the Catholic Church. “[Luther] was climbing Pilate’s stairs [in Rome] on hands and knees repeating a Pater Noster [Our Father] for each one and kissing each step for good measure in the hope of delivering a soul from purgatory. Luther regretted that his own father and mother were not yet dead and in purgatory so that he might confer on them so signal a favor. Failing that, he had resolved to release Grandpa Heine. The stairs were climbed the stairs were kissed. At the top Luther raised himself and exclaimed, not as legend would have it, ‘The just shall live by faith!’—he was not yet that far advanced. What he said was, ‘Who knows whether it is so?’” (ibid., 39).
 - **April 1515/October 1516:** Luther begins to lecture at Wittenburg: Romans and Galatians. “I greatly longed to understand Paul’s Epistle to the Romans and nothing stood in the way but that one expression, ‘the justice of God,’ because I took it to mean that justice whereby God is just and deals justly in punishing the unjust. My situation was that, although an impeccable monk, I stood before God as a sinner troubled in conscience, and I had no confidence that my merit would assuage him. Therefore I did not love a just and angry God, but rather hated and murmured against him. Yet I clung to the dear Paul and had a great yearning to know what he meant Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by his faith.’ Then I grasped the justice of God as that righteousness by which through grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise. The whole of Scripture took on new meaning, and whereas before the ‘justice of God’ had filled me with hate, now it became to me inexpressibly sweet in greater love. This passage of Paul became to me a gate to heaven” (ibid., 49–50).
 - **October 31, 1517:** Luther nailed his *95 Theses* on the door of Castle Church. “They are no protest against the Pope and the Roman Church, or any of her doctrines, not even against

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indulgences, but only against their abuse The form only is Romish, the spirit and aim are Protestant” (Schaff, *History*, 7:157, 158).²⁸

- **July 4, 1519:** Luther Debates Eck at Leipzig and Eck associates Luther with John Huss.²⁹
- **June 15, 1520** Pope Leo X ratifies and signs a bull excommunicating Luther, calling for the burning of his books. December 10, 1520 Luther burned the papal bull.
- **Last half of 1520:** Three Great Reformation Treatises: *To the Christian Nobility of Germany, The Babylonian Captivity of the Church, The Liberty of a Christian Man*.
 - “These three works, taken together, represent perhaps Luther’s most sustained and positive vision for what reformation should be” (Trueman, *Luther*, 46).
 - “The Word of God cannot be received and cherished by any works whatever but only by faith. Therefore it is clear that, as the soul needs only the Word of God for its life and righteousness, so it is justified by faith alone and not any works; for if it could be justified by anything else, it would not need the Word and consequently it would not need faith” (Martin Luther, “The Freedom of a Christian,” *Three Treatises*, trans. W. A. Lambert, 280).
 - “Although we are all equally priests, we cannot all equally minister and teach” (ibid., 292).
 - “The works themselves do not justify him before God, but he does the works out of spontaneous love in obedience to God and considers nothing except the approval of God, whom he would most scrupulously obey in all things” (ibid., 295).
- **April 17–18, 1521:** Luther’s two hearings at the Diet of Worms. “Since then Your Majesty and your lordships desire a simple reply, I will answer without horns and without teeth. Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason—I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other—my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and I will not recant anything for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. God help me. Amen Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise” (Bainton, 144).
- **May 4, 1521–March 3, 1522:** Luther is hidden in the Wartburg Castle, in Eisenach, by Prince Frederick. He translates the New Testament into German in 11 weeks, and begins work on the Old Testament translation.

²⁸ In the preface to the reprinting of his *Theses*, in his collected works in 1545 Luther wrote: “I allow them to stand, that by them it may appear how weak I was, and in what a fluctuating state of mind, when I began this business. I was then a monk and a mad papist (*papistia insanissimus*), and so submersed in the dogmas of the Pope that I would have readily murdered any person who denied obedience to the Pope” (Schaff, *History*, 7:157).

²⁹ An eyewitness description of Luther: “Martin of middle height, emaciated from care and study, so that you can almost count his bones through his skin. He is in the vigor of manhood and has a clear, penetrating voice. He is learned and has the Scripture at his fingers’ ends. He knows Greek and Hebrew sufficiently to judge of the interpretations. A perfect forest of words and ideas stands at his command. He is affable and friendly, in no sense dour or arrogant. He is equal to anything. In company he is vivacious, jocular, always cheerful and gay no matter how hard his adversaries press him. Everyone chides him for the fault of being a little too insolent in his reproaches and more caustic than is prudent for an innovator of religion or becoming to a theologian” (Bainton, 87).

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- **1525:** Marries Catherine, an ex-nun, and writes *The Bondage of the Will*.³⁰
- **October 1529:** The Marburg Colloquy, where Luther disagrees with Zwingli over the nature of Christ's presence in the Lord's Supper.³¹
- **John Calvin (1509–1564)**
 - Initially studied theology, but switched to law when his father ran afoul of the church.
 - Calvin's father died when he was twenty-one (1531) so Calvin felt freed up to study the classics. It was sometime during these years that Calvin was exposed to Luther's ideas.
 - Calvin describes his conversion in the "Preface" to his *Commentary on the Psalms*: "And first, since I was too obstinately devoted to the superstitions of Popery to be easily extricated from so profound an abyss of mire, God by a sudden conversion subdued and brought my mind to a teachable frame, which was more hardened in such matters than might have been expected from one at my early period of life. Having thus received some taste and knowledge of true godliness I was immediately inflamed with so intense a desire to make progress therein, that although I did not altogether leave off other studies, I yet pursued them with less ardor. I was quite surprised to find that before a year had elapsed, all who had any desire after purer doctrine were continually coming to me to learn, although I myself was as yet but a mere novice."
 - In November of 1533, Calvin's friend Nicholas Cop preached the opening sermon for the winter term at the University of Paris (filled with Lutheran-like doctrines). Calvin was so close to Cop that it is suspected that Calvin wrote the sermon.
 - Calvin fled France entirely, spending his exile in Basel Switzerland between 1534 and 1536
 - In March of 1536 he published the first edition of *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*.
 - "Calvin had done what is now clear no other theologian (not even Melanchthon) was capable of doing at that time. He had not only given genuine dogmatic form to the cardinal doctrines of the Reformation: he had molded those doctrines into one of the classic presentations of the Christian faith" (T. H. L. Park, *John Calvin*, 72).³²
 - The work is addressed to King Francis I, King of France, where Evangelicals were fined, imprisoned, had their tongues slit and were even burned alive.
 - Opening paragraph: "Our wisdom, in so far as it ought to be deemed true and solid Wisdom, consists almost entirely of two parts: the knowledge of God and of

³⁰ "[It was] a veritable sledge-hammer of a book, which contains Luther's most brilliant defense of his doctrines of Scripture, of the human will, and of the divine initiative in salvation. Along with his catechisms, it was one of his few books that he himself considered worthy of outliving him" (Trueman, *Luther*, 48).

³¹ "Luther was wrong about the Supper, but not nearly so wrong as he would have been if, being wrong, he had said to his opponents: 'Brethren, this matter is a trifle; and it makes really very little difference what a man thinks about the table of the Lord'" (Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 42).

³² Cf. Robert L. Reymond, *John Calvin: His Life and Influence*, 14–21, for several other assessments of the significance of Calvin's *Institutes* both ancient and modern.

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ourselves. But as these are connected together by many ties, it is not easy to determine which of the two precedes and gives birth to the other. For, in the first place, no man can survey himself without forthwith turning his thoughts towards the God in whom he lives and moves” (1.1.1).

- On predestination: “They who shut the gates that no one may dare seek a taste of this doctrine wrong men no less than God. For neither will anything else suffice to make us humble as we ought to be nor shall we otherwise sincerely feel how much we are obliged to God” (3.21.1).
- On prayer: “For nothing is more contrary to reverence for God than the levity that marks an excess of frivolity utterly devoid of awe. In this matter, the harder we find concentration to be, the more strenuously we ought to labor after it But here let us recall how unworthy it is, when God admits us to intimate conversation, to abuse his great kindness by mixing sacred and profane; but just as if the discourse were between us and an ordinary man, amidst our prayers we neglect him and flit about hither and thither” (3.20.5).
- **August 1536:** Calvin was on his way to Germany for a life of quiet study. He was forced to take an indirect route through Geneva where William Farel demanded he stay.
 - Again in his “Preface” to *Commentary on the Psalms*, Calvin explains what took place: “Wherever else I have gone, I have taken care to conceal that I was the author of that performance [*Institutes*]; and I had resolved to continue in the same privacy and obscurity, until at length William Farel detained me at Geneva, not so much by counsel and exhortation, as by a dreadful imprecation, which I felt to be as if God had from heaven laid his mighty hand upon me to arrest me And after having learned that my heart was set upon devoting myself to private studies for which I wished to keep myself free from other pursuits, and finding that he gained nothing by entreaties, he proceeded to utter an imprecation that God would curse my retirement, and the tranquillity of the studies which I sought, if I should withdraw and refuse to give assistance, when the necessity was so urgent. By this imprecation I was so stricken with terror, that I desisted from the journey which I had undertaken.”
- **1538–1541:** Calvin and Farel were banished from Geneva. At this time Calvin pastored a church of French-speaking refugees in Strasbourg.
- **September 13, 1541:** “Calvin re-entered the city . . . never to relocate again Upon his return, Calvin hit the town preaching. Reassuming his pulpit ministry precisely where he had left off three years earlier—in the very *next* verse of his earlier exposition—Calvin became a mainstay, preaching multiple times on Sunday and, during some weeks, each weekday” (Steven J. Lawson, *The Expository Genius of John Calvin*, 13).
- **June 5, 1559:** Calvin founded the Geneva Academy, which became known as “The School of Death,” because many graduates went on to martyrdom by ministering in France. “[The Academy was] destined to become the first Protestant ‘university’ in the world and the central

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educational institution of the Reformed church whose international influence over time far surpassed even the University of Wittenberg during Luther's lifetime. Calvin became its leading professor of theology, to which in time more than a thousand students from all parts of Europe sat daily to attend the lectures of Calvin and Beza, the Academy's first rector, and from which went forth missionaries throughout Europe and to the New World" (Reymond, *John Calvin*, 79).

- **Ulrich Zwingli (1484–1531)** (Allison, *Historical Theology*, 758)
 - Swiss theologian, pastor and chaplain and Reformer in Zurich
 - He arrived at the Reformation principles of justification by faith alone and of Scripture alone independently of, but parallel to, Martin Luther.
 - He wrote a foundational work for the Reformation, *On the Clarity and Certainty of the Word of God*, based on a sermon delivered at the Oetenbach convent, 1522 (*Zwingli and Bullinger*, vol. XXIV of the *Library of Christian Classics*, 49).
 - He held to the memorial view of the Lord's Supper against Luther.
 - The Anabaptists started in connection with Zwingli, but he was eventually against them, arguing in favor of infant baptism.³³
- **The English Reformation** (cf. Shelley, *Church History*, 7:264ff.)
 - "Reformation came to England during the reign of Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547), but not until the reign of his daughter Elizabeth (r. 1558–1603) did it gain firm footing" (Ferguson, Beeke, Haykin, *Church History 101*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 585).
 - King Henry VIII (1509–1547)
 - 1521—Writes *Defense of the Seven Sacraments* in response to Luther's attack
 - 1527—Henry asked the Pope to declare his marriage of eighteen years to Catherine invalid.
 - 1533—Henry secretly marries Anne Boleyn, a lady-in-waiting of the court, and later that year an English court declared Henry's marriage to Catherine null and void. The Pope excommunicated Henry for his actions.
 - 1534—The Act of Supremacy declared: "The king's majesty justly and rightly is and ought to be and shall be reputed the only supreme head in earth of the Church in England called *Anglicana Ecclesia*." (Shelley, *Church History*, 266). Thomas Cranmer, the archbishop of Canterbury, held the highest office in the Church of England under the king.
 - King Edward VI
 - 1547—Crowned king at age 10. His advisors were sympathetic to the Reformation.
 - 1553—Cranmer produced the Forty-Two Articles, which explained the faith of the Church of England along Protestant lines.
 - Bloody Mary

³³ For information on the Anabaptists see: William R. Estep, *The Anabaptist Story: An Introduction to Sixteenth-Century Anabaptism*.

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- 1553—Mary, the daughter of Catherine came to power. Mary was devotedly Catholic and committed to Rome.
- She saw to it that nearly 300 Protestants were burnt at the stake. John Foxe collected reports of the martyrdoms and recorded them in his *Book of Martyrs*.
- “Great indeed would be our mistake if we supposed that they suffered for the vague charge of refusing submission to the Pope, or desiring to maintain the independence of the Church of England. Nothing of the kind! The principal reason why they were burned was because they refused one of the peculiar doctrines of the Romish Church. On that doctrine, in almost every case, hinged their life or death. If they admitted it, they might live; if they refused it, they must die. The doctrine in question was the *real presence* of the body and blood of Christ in the consecrated elements of bread and wine in the Lord’s Supper” (J. C. Ryle, “The Special Reason Why Our Reformers Were Burned,” *Light from Old Times*).
- Martyrdom of John Rogers (1555)
 - “He was the first of that noble band of Christian heroes who suffered martyrdom for God’s truth in Queen Mary’s reign. By his courage and constancy at the stake he supplied a glorious example to all who followed him, and mightily helped forward the English Reformation” (Ryle, *Light from Old Times*, 56).
 - Rogers was acquainted with William Tyndale and joined him in the work of Bible translation, very likely contributing to what is known as the Matthew’s Bible.
 - He was brought before a council on charges of denying the real presence (*transubstantiation*) and for marrying as a priest.
 - Before the end of the year 1553 he was a prisoner, first in his own house, and afterwards in Newgate, where he was finally placed in January, 1554. Of his condition in prison we know but little, except that his wife was not allowed to see him, and that his treatment seems to have been very severe” (ibid., 60).
- 1563—The Thirty-Nine Articles are established as the authority in the Church of England with somewhat of a blend between Catholicism and Protestantism.
- **William Tyndale (1494–1536)**
 - Tyndale attended Oxford University: “[He] increased as well in the knowledge of tongues [he knew eight languages], and other liberal arts, as especially in the knowledge of the Scriptures, whereunto his mind was singularly addicted; insomuch that he, lying then in Magdalen Hall, read privily to certain students and fellows of Magdalen College some parcel of divinity; instructing them in the knowledge and truth of the Scriptures” (John Foxe).
 - Tyndale left Oxford and served as a tutor for Sir John Walsh, a wealthy man of Gloucestershire. During this time, in response to a priest telling him that the Pope was more important than God’s laws Tyndale said “If God spares my life, before many years pass I will make it possible for a boy behind the plow to know more Scripture than you do.”

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- In 1524 Tyndale tried to get authorization from the King of England for his translation but was denied and had to flee London.
- In exile (Germany and then Belgium) he translated and published an English version of the New Testament. Before Tyndale there were only hand-written manuscripts of the Bible in English, translated from Latin. Tyndale's work is the first time the original Greek and Hebrew were translated for the English-speaking world.
 - Tyndale's John 3:16: "For God so loveth the worlde that he hath geven his only sonne that none that beleve in him shuld perissh: but shuld have everlastinge lyfe."
 - Tyndale translated two-thirds of the Bible—all the New Testament (1st edition, 1526; 2nd edition, 1534) and Genesis through Chronicles (*The Pentateuch*, 1530; *Jonah*, 1531; however, Joshua through Chronicles was not published until after Tyndale's death, likely showing up in the Matthew Bible of 1537).
- He was finally captured when he was betrayed by Henry Phillips, the man he thought was his one true friend. He was charged as being a heretic and was imprisoned for eighteen months.
- William Tyndale was killed on October 6, 1536. He was tied to a stake, strangled by an executioner and burned. His dying prayer was, "Lord, open the king of England's eyes."
- Not long before his death Tyndale wrote to his friend John Frith: "I call God to record against the day we shall appear before our Lord Jesus, that I never altered one syllable of God's Word against my conscience, nor would do this day, if all that is in earth, whether it be honor, pleasure, or riches might be given me."
- **The Roman Catholic Church Responds to the Reformation: The Council of Trent (1545–1563)**
 - There are reactions against abuses of indulgences and relics; however, they are still promoted (see the Twenty-Fifth Session, December 1563).
 - Decrees on the Bible (Fourth Session, April 8, 1546):
 - The Old Latin Vulgate with the Apocrypha is declared to be the official canon.
 - The tradition not found in Scripture is "preserved in the Catholic Church by continuous succession" and is of equal authority with the Scripture.
 - "Furthermore, in order to restrain petulant spirits, it decrees, that no one, relying on his own skill, shall ... wresting the sacred Scripture to his own senses, presume to interpret the said sacred Scripture contrary to that sense which holy mother Church, —whose it is to judge of the true sense and interpretation of the holy Scriptures."
 - Baptismal Regeneration (Fifth Session, June 17, 1546):
 - "5. If anyone denies, that, by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, which is conferred in baptism, the guilt of original sin is remitted ... let him be anathema."
 - Justification
 - "CANON VII.—If any one saith, that all works done before Justification, in whatsoever way they be done, are truly sins, or merit the hatred of God; or that the

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more earnestly one strives to dispose himself for grace, the more grievously he sins: let him be anathema.”

- “CANON IX.—If any one saith, that by faith alone the impious is justified, in such wise as to mean, that nothing else is required to cooperate in order to the obtaining the grace of Justification, and that it is not in any way necessary, that he be prepared and disposed by the movement of his own will: let him be anathema.”
- See also: Sixth Session, January 13, 1547 chs. I, V, VII, VIII.
- Sacraments
 - Anyone who does not hold to seven Sacraments is anathema (Seventh Session, March 3, 1547, *Canon I*, IV).
 - “If any one saith, that the sacraments of the New Law are not necessary unto salvation, but superfluous ... let him be anathema” (ibid.).
 - “Canon III—If anyone saith, that the sacrifice of the mass is only a sacrifice of praise and of thanksgiving; or, that it is a bare commemoration of the sacrifice consummated on the cross, but not a propitiatory sacrifice; or, that it profits him only who receives; and that it ought not to be offered for the living and the dead for sins, pains, satisfactions, and other necessities: let him be anathema” (Twenty-Second Session, September 17, 1562, Ch. IX, Canon III).

Eighth Period: The age of polemic orthodoxy and exclusive confessionalism, with reactionary and progressive movements. From the Treaty of Westphalia to the French Revolution. AD 1648–1790.

● **Overview of the Period**

- “The Age of Reformation was marked by debate among Christians about the way of salvation. The Age of Reason was highlighted by the denial of any supernatural religion, respect for science and reason replaced the Christian faith as the cornerstone of Western culture” (Shelley, *Church History*, 309).
- “By the eighteenth century, Christian Europe had wearied of constant religious strife and bloodshed. Intellectuals embraced the Enlightenment ideal of reason as the ultimate authority. Theology was made subject to philosophy. Deism taught that God created the world, subjected it to natural law, and let nature take its course. This was not the personal God of the Bible; deism was a rejection of revelation in the name of reason. Rationalism prevailed in the eighteenth century and continues to influence theology today” (Furgeson, Beeke, Haykin, *Church History 101*, Kindle Electronic Edition: Location 620).
- The First Great Awakening (1730’s–1740’s) was led by men like Jonathan Edwards and George Whitefield in colonial America.

● **The Thirty Years War (1618–1648) and the Treaty of Westphalia (1648)**

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- “Preparations for war were laid early in the seventeenth century when Protestants formed a league of German princes and the Catholics created a similar Catholic League. Fighting broke out in 1618” (Shelley, *Church History*, 303).
- “The Catholic forces could not subdue the Protestants in northern Germany and the Protestants could not control the Catholics in the south Out of sheer futility the religious zeal of Catholics and Calvinists cooled, and men began to question the territorial idea. Denominationalism was an alternative” (ibid., 304).
- “Perhaps rulers should not allow their decisions to be guided by religious or confessional considerations, but rather by their own self-interest, or by the interests of their subjects. Thus the modern secular state began to develop. And with it there appeared an attitude of doubt regarding matters that previous generations had taken for granted (González, *Story*, 2:140–141).
- “Religious prejudice seemed like a far greater danger than atheism. So a thirst for tolerance and truths common to all men spread” (Shelley, *Church History*, 313).
- **Puritansim (1560–c. 1758)**
 - “That, surely, is the essential and most characteristic note of Puritanism—the feeling that the Reformation had not gone far enough” (Martyn Lloyd Jones, “Puritanism and Its Origin,” *The Puritans: Their Origins and Successors*, 242).
 - “The term *Puritan* was first used in the 1560’s of those English Protestants who considered the reforms under Queen Elizabeth incomplete and called for further ‘purification’ (from the Greek word *katharos*, ‘pure’). Its negative connotation derived from its being a translation of the Latin term *catharus* (Puritan) or *cathari* (Puritans; from *katharos*), a title given to medieval heretics Throughout the sixteenth century it was used more often as a scornful adjective than as a substantive noun, and was rejected as slanderous in whatever quarter it was applied” (J. R. Beeke and R. J. Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, xv).
 - “Doctrinally, Puritanism was a kind of vigorous Calvinism; experientially, it was warm and contagious; evangelistically, it was aggressive, yet tender; ecclesiastically, it was theocentric and worshipful; politically, it aimed to be scriptural, balanced, and bound by conscience before God in the relations of king, Parliament, and subjects” (ibid., xix).
 - “Between 1629 and 1642 some 25,000 Puritans migrated to New England” (Shelley, *Church History*, 305).
- **John Owen (1616–1683)** (cf. Beeke and Pederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 452–63).
 - Called “the prince of the English divines” and noted to be “a genius with learning second only to Calvin’s”
 - “Throughout his teen years, young Owen studied eighteen to twenty hours per day.”
 - 1643 he published *A Display of Arminianism*, which was a classic explanation of Calvinism that gained him instant notoriety.
 - 1650 Owen was appointed the official preacher to the state under Cromwell.

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- 1651 Owen became the dean of Christ Church College, Oxford, and eighteen months later became vice-chancellor of Oxford University under the chancellorship of Cromwell.
- Toward the end of his life he fell out of favor with the government.
- The day before his death, Owen wrote to a friend, “I am going to Him whom my soul has loved, or rather who has loved me with an everlasting love—which is the whole ground of my consolation I am leaving the ship of the church in a storm; but whilst the great Pilot is in it, the loss of a poor under-rower will be inconsiderable. Live, and pray, and hope, and wait patiently, and do not despond; the promise stands invincible, that He will never leave us, nor forsake us.”
- “A view of Christ as pierced will cause mourning in them that have received the promise of the Spirit of grace and supplication there mentioned The more believers are exercised in this view of Christ, the more humble they are, the more they are kept in that mourning frame which is universally opposite unto all the interests of sin, and which keeps the soul watchful against all its attempts. Sin never reigned in a humble, mourning soul Can any spiritual eye behold Christ dying for sin, and continue to live in sin? Shall we keep that alive in us which he died for, that it might not eternally destroy us? Can we behold him bleeding for our sins, and not endeavor to give them their death-wound? The efficacy of the exercise of faith herein unto the mortification of sin is known unto all believers by experience” (“The Dominion of Sin and Grace,” *The Works of John Owen*, 7:520).
- “Nothing but the death of Christ *for* us will be the death of sin *in* us” (ibid., 522).
- “Mortification from a self-strength, carried on by ways of self-invention, unto the end of a self-righteousness, is the soul and substance of all false religion in the world” (“Mortification of Sin in Believers,” *The Works of John Owen*, 7:7).
- **Jonathan Edwards (1703–1758)**
 - “Edwards was extraordinary. By many estimates, he was the most acute early American philosopher and the most brilliant of all American theologians. At least three of his many works—*Religious Affections*, *Freedom of the Will*, and *The Nature of True Virtue*—stand as masterpiece in the larger history of Christian literature” (Marsden, *Jonathan Edwards*, 1).
 - He was minister at Northampton from February 15, 1727–June 22, 1750.
 - “Edwards was caught up in the Great Awakening, which began in 1740; he became one of the ablest instruments and defenders of the revival. He preached ‘Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God’ (Deut. 32:35) at Enfield, Connecticut, on July 8, 1741. The congregation was profoundly moved. A witness wrote, ‘before the sermon was done, there was a great moaning and crying out throughout the whole house. What shall I do to be saved? Oh, I am going to hell! Oh, what shall I do for Christ!’” (Beeke & Peederson, *Meet the Puritans*, 199).
 - “The bow of God’s wrath is bent, and the arrow made ready on the string, and justice bends the arrow at your heart, and strains the bow, and it is nothing but the mere pleasure of God, and that of an angry God, without any promise or obligation at all, that keeps the arrow one moment from being made drunk with your blood. Thus all

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you that never passed under a great change of heart, by the mighty power of the Spirit of God upon your souls; all you that were never born again, and made new creatures, and raised from being dead in sin, to state of new, and before altogether unexperienced, light and life, are in the hands of an angry God” (“Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God,” *The Works of Jonathan Edwards*, Banner of Truth Edition, 2:9).

- 1750: Edwards was dismissed from the pastorate in Northampton for various reasons that seem to be connected with his rejection of the Half-Way covenant.³⁴
- 1751: Edwards settles in Stockbridge, Massachusetts, as a pastor and missionary to Indians.
- “All things else, with regard to worthiness, importance, and excellence, are perfectly as nothing in comparison of him. And therefore, if God has respect to things according to their nature and proportions, he must necessarily have the greatest respect to himself. It would be against the perfection of his nature, his wisdom, holiness, and perfect rectitude, whereby he is disposed to do everything that is fit to be done, to suppose otherwise” (Edwards, *The End for which God Created the World*, 1:98 [published 1765]).
- “The glorious excellencies and beauty of God will be what will forever entertain the minds of the saints, and the love of God will be their everlasting feast. The redeemed will indeed enjoy other things; they will enjoy the angels, and will enjoy one another: but that which they shall in enjoy in the angels, or each other, or in anything else whatsoever that will yield them delight and happiness, will be what shall be seen of God in them” (*God Glorified in Man’s Dependence*, 2:5 [preached July 8, 1731]).

Ninth Period: The spread of infidelity, and the revival of Christianity in Europe and America, with missionary efforts encircling the globe. From the French Revolution to the present time. AD 1790–

- **Overview of the Period** (cf. Ferguson, Beeke, Haykin, *Church History 101*, Kindle Electronic Edition)
 - “The church awakened once more to her true calling—to preach the gospel to the ends of the earth. Missionaries went out from many parts of Europe and North America to build God’s kingdom in Africa, Asia and Latin America” (Location 672).
 - “Two German philosophers cast a long shadow over the church during the nineteenth century: Immanuel Kant and Freidrich Shleiermacher” (Location 656).
 - Battle for the Bible against Rationalistic Modernism in the 20th century.
- **William Carey (1761–1834)**

³⁴ “As the zeal of the New England founders cooled, fewer men and women could bear public witness to the grace in their souls. To keep membership from shrinking drastically, many churches in 1662 had to settle for the Half-Way covenant. Under this policy the ‘unawakened’ could enjoy a kind of partial membership, baptizing their children and joining the congregational activities, but not taking full Communion” (Shelley, *Church History*, 344).

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- Much of Carey’s denomination was either in bondage to a cold hyper-Calvinism or just beginning to come out of it.
- “Carey had to make the conditions in which his Society could be born. He could not merely apply the match to the tinder, for the tinder itself had to be prepared. When he woke to the missionary vision, he found to his amazement that most of his fellow Christians were fast asleep. He had to create the very desire which at length created the Mission; to provoke the demand which he himself would then supply” (Pearce, *William Carey*, 10).
- Carey was a poor shoemaker and pastor in a small village churches.
 - “In order to fix the conviction [of the world’s need], to give length, breadth and depth to his thought, he makes a map of the world, with every country he puts whatever statements and figures will set forth the facts concerning its population, their condition, intellectual, moral, etc., and hangs it before him on the wall that he may read and ponder as he stitches and pegs away” (D. L. Leonard, “Carey, the Founder of Modern Missions,” *BibSac* 049:196 [Oct 1892], 625).
- **1793—“The Enquiry”**: The full title is “An Enquiry Into The Obligations Of Christians, To Use Means For The Conversion Of The Heathens. In Which The Religious State Of The Different Nations Of The World, The Success Of Former Undertakings, And The Practicability Of Further Undertakings, Are Considered”³⁵
 - “It must undoubtedly strike every considerate mind, what a vast proportion of the sons of Adam there are, who yet remain in the most deplorable state of heathen darkness, without any means of knowing the true God, except what are afforded them by the works of nature; and utterly destitute of the knowledge of the gospel of Christ, or of any means of obtaining it” (*Enquiry*, 62–63).
 - “As to their uncivilized, and barbarous way of living, this can be no objection to any, except those whose love of ease renders them unwilling to expose themselves to inconveniencies for the good of others It is no objection to commercial men. It only requires that we should have as much love to the souls of our fellow-creatures, and fellow sinners, as they have for the profits arising from a few otter-skins, and all these difficulties would be easily surmounted” (*Enquiry*, 68–69).
- **May 30–31, 1792**: Preached “The Deathless Sermon” to The Northampton Association of ‘Particular Baptist’ churches gathered in Nottingham. Carey taught Isaiah 54:2–3 and had two headings: (1) Expect great things from God; (2) Attempt great things for God.
- A group of small town pastors, nobodies from nowhere, really, united together to act on Carey’s sermon and his *Inquiry*. They founded the Particular Baptist Society for the Propagation of the Gospel amongst the Heathen (cf. Pearce, *Carey*, 84).

³⁵ <http://www.wmcarey.edu/carey/enquiry/anenquiry.pdf>; Smith, *Life*, 23 explains: “This Enquiry has a literary interest of its own, as a contribution to the statistics and geography of the world, written in a cultured and almost finished style, such as few, if any, University men of that day could have produced, for none were impelled by such a motive as Carey had.”

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- **June 13 1793–June 9, 1834:** Carey’s Forty Years in India³⁶
 - He labored for seven years before seeing his first native convert (1800).
 - Carey worked alongside Marshman and Ward (they were known as Serampore Trio).
 - “I am more in my element translating the Word of God than in any other employment” Carey wrote to Fuller in 1804” (Carey; as quoted in Pearce, 234).
 - “Carey was given the opportunity, the power and the joy of rendering God’s Word, or precious portions thereof, into thirty-five languages to a very empire of peoples” (ibid., 10).
- “I have never yet repented of any sacrifice that I have made for the Gospel, but find that consolation of mind which can come from God alone” (Carey, as quoted in George Smith, *Life of William Carey*, 55).

● **The Rise of Liberalism**

- Immanuel Kant (1724–1804) “wrote a famous essay titled *What Is Enlightenment?* In which he summed it up in the imperative *sapere aude!*—‘think for yourself.’ For him this applied in religion as in any other realm of culture For Kant, authentic religion . . . was simply living a life in accordance with rationally discernible duty” (Olson, *Christian Theology*, 541).
- “Under the influence of Kant, liberal Protestant thinkers insisted on reinterpreting all doctrines and dogmas of Christianity in ethical and moral terms, and those that could not be so reinterpreted were neglected if not discarded entirely” (e.g., the Trinity; ibid., 550).
- “Schleiermacher [1768–1734] wanted to find a point of contact for Christianity in his circle of friends, most of whom were quite skeptical of traditional religion. For them he wrote *On Religion: Addresses in Response to Its Cultured Critics*. In a sense this book laid the foundation for liberal theology to come. In it the author explained that the essence of religion lies not in rational proofs of the existence of God, supernaturally revealed dogmas or churchly rituals or formalities, but in a ‘fundamental, distinct, and integrative element of human life and culture’—the feeling (*Gefühl*) of being utterly dependent on something infinite that manifests itself in and through finite things” (ibid., 543).
- “Schleiermacher disposed of the need for the revelation given in Scripture The Bible is simply ‘the original interpretation of the Christian feeling’, and by means of our own feeling we are free to add further ‘interpretation’” (Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 8).³⁷

³⁶ In 1807 William’s son, Felix Carey, who was twenty-one, was ordained and set apart for Burma. An excerpt from the letter reveals what William Carey wrote to his son at his parting: “Preach the never-failing Word of the Cross [B]e instant in season and out. Do not despise the patient instruction of one Burman Cultivate the utmost cordiality with them as your equals. Never let European pride and superiority appear at the Mission House, Rangoon. The day when our Savior says to you and to us ‘Well done!’ will make amends for all we feel at parting” (Pearce, 271).

³⁷ “Liberal theology very rarely pretends itself as being in opposition to Scripture. On the contrary, its exponents claimed the authority of the [NT] for the view that Christianity is life not doctrine” (Murray, 12).

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- “By 1857 Charles Hodge believed that the radical ideas Schleiermacher and his school ‘are the life-blood of two-thirds of what passes for orthodoxy in Germany, and the affiliated systems in this country’ (ibid., 10).
- “In the words of Fosdick a chief spokesmen for liberalism in 1924: “Today there are two parties in the churches. They are active in controversy now, and every day their consciousness of a difference becomes more sharp and clear. The crux of their conflict lies at this point: one part thinks that the essence of Christianity is its original mental frameworks; the other party is convinced that the essence of Christianity is its abiding experiences” (Murray, *Evangelicalism Divided*, 15).
- J. Gresham Machen was Fosdick’s main opponent.
 - “Modern liberalism has lost all sense of the gulf that separates the creature from the Creator; its doctrine of man follows naturally from its doctrine of God At the very root of the modern liberal movement is the loss of the consciousness of sin” (Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*, 55).
 - “According to Christian belief, man exists for the sake of God; according to the liberal Church, in practice if not in theory, God exists for the sake of man” (ibid., 129).
- **Important Events in the Roman Catholic Church in the 19th and 20th Century**
 - Dec. 8, 1854—Pope Pius IX declared that the immaculate conception of the Virgin Mary was a divinely revealed fact in his bull *Ineffabilis Deus*: “We concluded that we should no longer delay in decreeing and defining by our supreme authority the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin” (*Ineffabilis Deus*; then he says to deny it is to suffer shipwreck in the faith).
 - Vatican Council I (1869–1870) was convened by Pope Pius IX.
 - Against modern liberalism and rationalism (cf. Schaff, *Creeeds*, 1:137).
 - “We teach and define as a divinely revealed dogma that when the Roman Pontiff speaks *ex cathedra* . . . he possesses, by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter, that infallibility which the divine Redeemer willed his Church to enjoy in defining doctrine concerning faith or morals” (Fourth Session, Chapter IV).
 - November 1, 1950 Pope Pius XII declared by his own authority that “the Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory” (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 44; cf. 45 for the anathema).
 - Vatican Council II (1962–1965) was convened by Pope John XXIII and was an *aggiornamento* (updating) of the Catholic Church. The Council showed a change in the Roman Church’s approach to winning people (protestants and otherwise) to the Roman Catholic Faith.³⁸

³⁸ “In today’s religious panorama it is evident that Catholicism has a very clear program in its pursuit of catholicity. This is particularly noticeable in its ecumenical strategy following the Second Vatican Council—every opportunity to advance this cause has been seized upon. The apparent signs of willingness for dialogue and availability for interaction with evangelicals should make them ask themselves whether the final goal of the Catholic church is not in actual fact the extension of its own

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- **Inerrancy in the Modern Era** (adapted from Allison, *Historical Theology* 109–119).
 - “The ancient geocentric theory of the universe proposed by Ptolemy ... was replaced by the heliocentric theory of Copernicus [1473–1543]... . The impact on current thinking was immense Similarly, the discovery of new worlds and new people—many of whom followed religions other than Christianity—raised questions about their origins, the rightness of their beliefs and so forth.”
 - **Socinianism (16th–17th century)** allowed for errors in portions of the Scripture such as records of historical events, morals, and descriptions of natural or scientific matters. In response, the Westminster Confession of Faith (1646) explained that by saving faith “a Christian believes to be true whatever is revealed in the Word because the authority of God himself speaks in it” (14.2).
 - **Isaac La Peyrère (1592–1676)** said humans had been around for 50,000 years and Adam was not the first man. He is said to have set off the warfare between theology and science.
 - **Baruch Spinoza (1632–1677)** insisted that human reason stands above Scripture and judges Scripture [He] followed Descartes in viewing man himself, as a thinking subject as the starting point of human knowledge (thus his famous phrase: *cogito, ergo sum*).
 - He was the first to deny authorship of the Pentateuch. He pointed to Numbers 12:3 and Moses’ death (Deut 34).
 - Influenced others such as Jean LeClerc (1657–1736), “the father of biblical criticism.”
 - “Biblical criticism spread to Great Britain as well and was particularly evident in English Deism. This eighteenth-century movement attacked the truthfulness of biblical statements as part of a larger attack on scriptural revelation itself as being subservient to reason.”
 - “Both English Deism and the early development of German biblical criticism were largely a theological attack against Scripture. Full-scale attacks against the truthfulness of Scripture awaited another development known as the documentary hypothesis. This series of theories proposes that the Pentateuch is a collection of selections from several written documents (abbreviated *JEPD*)... composed by different authors at different places [over time].”
 - Originated in 1753 when Astruc observed that the Hebrew word for God in Genesis 1 is different from that used in Genesis 2.
 - The *JEPD* theory was introduced to the English speaking world by William Robert Smith in his article entitled ‘Bible’ in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1875).
 - **1859: Darwin’s *Origin of Species*** is first published. In response, many began to distinguish between *inerrancy*, which means that the Bible is without error and *infallibility*, which many defined as meaning that the Bible is true in matters of faith and practice. Thus, this distinction allows for historical and scientific errors in the Bible.
 - Many seminaries drifted in their commitment to inerrancy, espousing instead infallibility:

synthesis so as to include the evangelicals’ ideals within its own horizons” (Leonardo De Chirico, “An Evangelical Approach Towards Understanding Roman Catholicism,” vaticanfiles.org).

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- Fuller Theological Seminary, 1947: “The books which form the canon of the Old and New Testaments as originally given are plenary [fully] inspired and free from error in the whole and in the part. These books constitute the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.”
- Fuller Theological Seminary, 1971: “Scripture is an essential part and trustworthy record of this divine disclosure. All the books of the Old and New Testaments, given by divine inspiration, are the written Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.”
- Karl Barth (Neo-orthodox) explicitly denied the inerrancy of the Scriptures, and instead taught that the Bible becomes the Word of God, but that it isn’t the Word of God on its own.
- Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (1978):
 - It was “an interdenominational joint effort by hundreds of evangelical scholars and leaders to defend biblical inerrancy against the trend toward liberal and neo-orthodox conceptions of Scripture” (Introductory Note).
 - “The authority of Scripture is a key issue for the Christian Church in this and every age. Those who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior are called to show the reality of their discipleship by humbly and faithfully obeying God’s written Word. To stray from Scripture in faith or conduct is disloyalty to our Master. Recognition of the total truth and trustworthiness of Holy Scripture is essential to a full grasp and adequate confession of its authority” (Preface).