

Apostolic Church (33-100)

Acts 11: 26 ...and in Antioch the disciples were for the first time called Christians.”

A. The Great Commission: Matthew 28: 19-20 “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit....”

1. Acts 8 – Conversion of Queen Candace’s Eunuch by Phillip
2. Acts 9 – Conversion of Paul – Paul’s mission to the Gentiles
3. Acts 10 – Conversion of Cornelius the Centurion by Peter
 - A. Jewish Diaspora
 - i. 722 BC – Kingdom of Israel conquered by the Assyrians
 - ii. 588 BC Kingdom of Judah conquered by the Babylonians – Babylonian Captivity or Exile (Daniel and the Lion’s Den – why Iraq has so many biblical sites) sent to different parts of the empire
 - B. Greek Empire –Conquests of Alexander the Great (356-323 BC)
 - i. Common Language
 - ii. Alexander’s Empire stretched from Greece, Persian Empire, into India
 - C. Roman Empire (27 BC to 476 AD) Europe, North Africa, Britain, and the Near East
 - i. Pax Romana – Safe Travel
 - ii. Latin as the Lingua Franca – travel from Britain to Africa and be understood
 - iii. Systems of Roads – some still used today

B. Church Councils

1. 1st Council Acts 1:21-26 Replacement of Judas by Matthias
 - i. Irenaeus (187) wrote that Peter “committed to the hands of Linus the office of the episcopate - Tertullian (200) confirmed this –we see the apostolic succession in action
2. Acts 15 – Council of Jerusalem – Do you need to become Jewish first to be a Christian? Do you need to be circumcised and follow the law?

Ante Nicean Church (100-312)

- A. Centers of the Church grow up in Jerusalem (James is the 1st Bishop of Jerusalem), Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, Ephesus
- B. Writings of the Early Church Fathers

Internal Struggles – Heresies in the Church

- C. Gnosticism – influenced by pagan philosophies especially Neo-Platonism. Dualistic, matter is evil, levels of special knowledge
- D. Arianism – led by Bishop Arius, denied the divinity of Christ, said that the Son was created and subordinate to the Father

- E. Novatian Schism – after the Decian persecutions of 260 A.D. – those who denied Christianity under threat should not be allowed back into the Church

External Struggles – Persecution of the Church

- A. Stephen considered the first martyr (Acts 7:59) and James of Zebedee (Acts 12:2)
- B. Persecutions under the Roman Empire
 1. Nero (54-68) Paul and Peter and executed under Nero
 2. Domitian (81-96)
 3. Trajan (98-117) Ignatius Bishop of Antioch and Simeon head of the church in Jerusalem martyred
 4. Marcus Aurelius (161-180) A stoic, he believed the doctrine of the immortality of the soul was dangerous-persecution in Lyons c 177 -48 Christians killed
 5. Septimus Severus (193-211) Origen's father beheaded, the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity, baptism made a crime
 6. Maximinus the Thracian (235) directed against heads of the church – Pope Pontian banished to Sardinia
 7. Decius (250) orders all citizens to sacrifice to the emperor –first organized persecution of Christian laity
 8. Valerian (253) All Christian clergy must sacrifice to the gods
 9. 261 1st edict of tolerance published by Gallienus (co-emperor with father Valerian)
 10. Diocletian (303-311) Last great persecution

Why? Christians would not sacrifice to the emperor-begun in 14AD when Augustus is deified by the Senate. Jews were exempt from this, but no one else. Christians were different-manners, conduct, dress, manner of burial.

Christian Symbols under persecution

- A. Chi Rho
- B. Alpha and Omega
- C. Ichthus – Greek for fish **ΙΧΘΥΣ** which form an acrostic Jesus Christ God Son Savior

The Conversion of Constantine and the Edict of Milan (Edict of Tolerance) 313