

Church History

Introduction to the Middle ages

590 –1517

Middle Ages

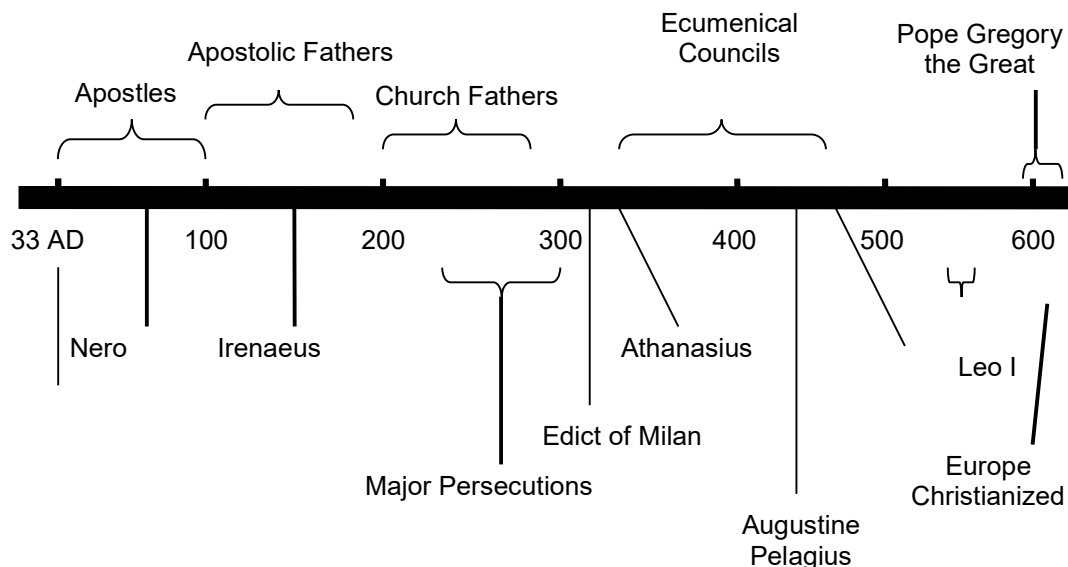
A The Age of Papal Hierarchy 590 –1054/1073

- 1 Gregory the Great 590
- 2 Mohammed and creation of Islam 700
- 3 Division of East and West 1054
- 4 Gregory the VII 1073

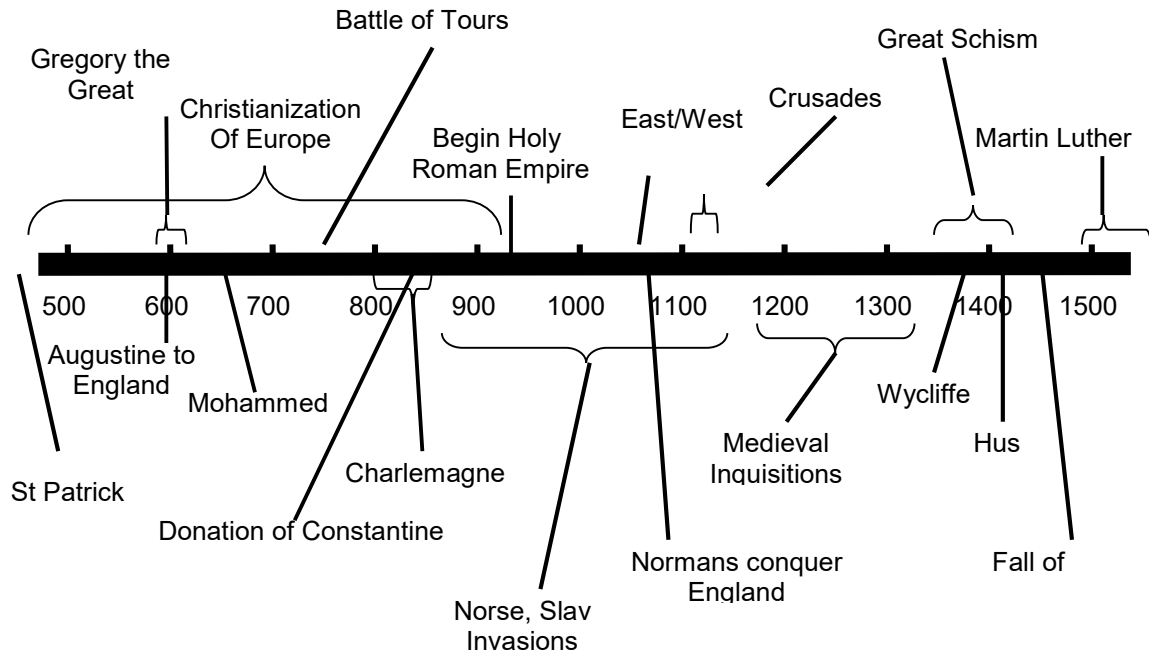
B The Age of Scholasticism 1054 – 1517

- 1 Systemization of Theology
- 2 Crusades and the birth of Nation-States
- 3 Anselm and Thomas Aquinas
- 4 Birth Pangs of Reformation
 - Wycliffe
 - Hus

Early Church Timeline



Middle Ages Timeline



Christian Roman Empire

- ❖ Conversion of Constantine
- ❖ Christianity that was becoming more and more the only favored religion
- ❖ The Roman Empire was more and more filled with the “barbarians”
 - ❖ serving in the army, serving as slaves, and ultimately taking over
- ❖ Foundation for the ideal of Christendom
 - ❖ Ambrose, Augustine, Gregory, Justinian
- ❖ In the Middle Ages came the ideal of all society to be a fusion of the Christian Church and the Christian State

Monasticism

- ❖ During the Middle Ages that monasticism really hits its stride.
- ❖ Monks -- reaction against the worldly living that Christians were practicing.
 - ❖ At first they were hermits living in desolate places
 - ❖ afterward they often organized into communities
- ❖ Standardization of monastic living (advocated by Benedict) became the norm
- ❖ Monks became one of the most important of the civilizing influences in European society
 - ❖ For the first part of the middle ages, monks were responsible for the transmission of learning
- ❖ Served as the missionaries of early Europe
 - ❖ Often the first thing done among a pagan nation would be the founding of monasteries

Division of the Roman Empire

- ❖ the division of the Roman Empire had a huge impact on the further development of the Church
 - ❖ main reason that we still have the Western (Roman Catholic) church and the Eastern (Orthodox) church divided from each other

- ❖ first under Diocletian, then Constantine who created a beautiful new capital in the east, at a city called Byzantium
- ❖ council of Constantinople of 381 declared that the bishop of Constantinople was to be given precedence of honor among all the other bishops, except Rome only
- ❖ After drifting apart for Centuries, East and West eventually completely split in the high Middle Ages

Fall of the Western Empire

- ❖ the Western empire and the old Rome were declining
- ❖ Barbarians were increasing
 - ❖ sometimes invading armies
 - ❖ sometimes simply huge numbers of immigrants
- ❖ Rome itself was conquered and sacked
 - ❖ by the Visigoths in 410
 - ❖ by the Vandals in 455
- ❖ In 476 the last Western emperor was deposed
- ❖ major impact on the role of the church and of the bishop of Rome
 - ❖ Most of the barbarians respected the church and left it intact
 - ❖ pope of Rome gained more power by the absence of an emperor

Conversion of the Barbarian Tribes

- ❖ Goths, Vandals, Burgundians, Lombards
 - ❖ Germanic tribes who finally succeeded in destroying the western Empire
 - ❖ not totally uncivilized
 - ❖ Many of them, following the lead of the Visigoths, had already adopted Christianity.
 - ❖ influence of the monk Ulphilas, an Arian bishop (translated the Bible into Gothic) not only barbarians but heretics

Conversion of the Barbarian Tribes

- ❖ Franks, Burgundians, Saxons
 - ❖ pressing on Gaul and Britain
 - ❖ Clovis, king of the Franks, became the first barbarian king to accept Catholic (i.e. orthodox Trinitarian) baptism in 496
 - ❖ Franks became the Catholic Church's loyal subjects for centuries
 - ❖ defender of the papacy in Charlemagne's time (c. 800)

Conversion of the Barbarian Tribes

- ❖ Britain, Ireland
 - ❖ missionary Patrick had gone from Christian Britain to pagan Ireland around 432
 - ❖ In the next centuries Irish monks became missionaries to all of Europe during the darkest ages of the church
- ❖ Charlemagne and his successors pretty much completed the task of Christianizing the western barbarians
- ❖ By A.D. 1000 the ideal of "Christian Europe" was a reality. But the quality of the Christianity was suspect

Growth and Decline of the Papacy

- ❖ pope became the visible symbol of both the Church and what remained of the glory of Rome
 - ❖ Popes were good and popes were bad, but both kinds of popes never lost sight of the possibilities of such an office
- ❖ At times the popes were at the mercy of their secular protectors
- ❖ They played off kingdoms against each other to ensure the survival of what they conceived of as the church's mission
- ❖ the creation of a Holy Roman Empire was conceived as a way to institutionalize the Christian state envisioned by Augustine
- ❖ Charlemagne was crowned Emperor on Christmas day, A.D. 800

Growth and Decline of the Papacy

- ❖ emperors wanted to have a role in the church far above what the bishops thought appropriate
- ❖ The practice of "lay investiture" meant that the local rulers picked their own church officials
- ❖ ironically the power-grabbing popes which were the "reformers" in this conflict
- ❖ Growth of nation-states in the High Middle Ages after 1100 spelled ultimate doom for the papacy's universal dominion
- ❖ popes were always going to be resisted by the temporal power

Eastern Empire and Eastern Church

- ❖ Eastern empire never fell until 1453
- ❖ a separate Christianity developed with emphases that differed from Rome's
- ❖ The eastern church always believed that the emperor was a partner in the leadership of the church
 - ❖ Elections of bishops were always under his or her control
- ❖ Constantine's dream was realized more accurately and completely in the East

Eastern Empire and Eastern Church

- ❖ Iconoclastic controversy was an important formative episode in the East's history
- ❖ Icons remain a fundamental part of Orthodox worship today
- ❖ By the late part of the millennium relations were quite strained between the leadership of the two branches of the church
- ❖ In 1054 the leaders of the respective churches excommunicated each other and the schism remains to this day

Feudalism to Nation States

- ❖ feudalism developed around the time of Charlemagne

- ❖ society was organized in a hierarchy in which each leader swore an oath to a greater leader
- ❖ oaths were usually centered around the possession of land.
- ❖ system began to be superseded by the growth of trade and the middle class
- ❖ By the High Middle Ages, the role of cash had grown to the point where the feudal structures began to break down
- ❖ Kings stopped being feudal lords and started being rulers of the whole people
- ❖ common person began to think of himself as an Englishman or a Frenchman

Islam & the Crusades

- ❖ Mohammed heard the call of "God" in 610
- ❖ By 750 Islamic armies had conquered Middle East, Spain, all of North Africa
- ❖ they were courteous towards Jews and Christians as "people of the Book,"
 - ❖ European views of Muslims were of only one kind. The Muslim was the Antichrist and the heretic, and furthermore remained a military threat
- ❖ 1095, Pope Urban II, partly in response to the appeals of the Eastern emperor, preached a Crusade which would liberate Palestine from the heathen
- ❖ First Crusade was the most successful
 - ❖ establishing small kingdoms along the Mediterranean coast of the Holy Land and capturing Jerusalem
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- ❖ fourth Crusade was so bad that it diverted from fighting Muslims to instead attacking Constantinople itself
 - ❖ sacked the city and set up a new Latin-based king and church there
 - ❖ Greeks took back the city years later, but any respect for Western European Christianity pretty much ended at that time
- ❖ The crusades had the same effect on Muslims, establishing a hatred of Western Christians that still has repercussions on modern relations with the Middle East.

Medieval Theology

- ❖ Scholasticism
 - ❖ About 1000, a new learning began to ferment. A new style of study began to replace the old way of simply quoting the earlier masters
- ❖ a new rigor to argumentation, a new desire to return to the sources of learning
- ❖ Thomas Aquinas and his *Summa Theologica*
 - ❖ highest development of this new learning
- ❖ Theological questions were wrestled with in a new way, more clearly in some cases than before
- ❖ Anselm's work on the doctrine of the Atonement, *Cur Deus Homo*, which stressed in a new way, and more clearly than before, how Christ redeemed us
- ❖ New disputants led the way for new dogmas
 - ❖ Although the doctrine of transubstantiation was not new, it was not formally declared until 1215
- ❖ Scholastics such as Gottschalk explored the doctrine of predestination. Most theologians who came to theories that sounded like later Protestantism were condemned.

Medieval Reform

- ❖ the final hardening of the Church into an anti-grace stance and the development of all sorts of other abuses
 - ❖ such as the indulgence (an incidental product of the Crusades)
 - ❖ Inquisition and Secular prosecution of “Heretics”
- ❖ Led to early calls for reform by such men as Wyclif and Hus
- ❖ These men were clear forerunners of Protestantism

Summary

- ❖ The Middle Ages have a lot to teach us
- ❖ most emphatically not an irrelevant time period for Protestants
- ❖ it may be that the middle ages had more in common with Reformation Christianity than Reformation Christianity has in common with modern Evangelicalism
- ❖ “We need to learn from these pre-moderns that there are other ways to look at faith than as a thin veneer upon modern life, or as a set of four laws out of a booklet.”

Summary

- ❖ we also need to explore the devotion of the Middle Ages
- ❖ These men and women, especially in the monasteries, spent a lot of time thinking and writing about God.
- ❖ Many of them were true believers; many weren't
- ❖ We will find brethren there if we are willing to look.