

TWENTY CENTURIES

A Survey of Church History



PASTOR RICK PHILLIPS
SECOND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, GREENVILLE, SC

THE FIFTH CENTURY

THE FIFTH CENTURY



- **Leading Church Figures**
 - John Chrysostom
 - Jerome
 - Augustine
- **Controversies over the Nature of Christ**
 - Councils of Ephesus, Chalcedon
- **The Barbarian Invasions / Fall of Rome**

Leading Christian Figures



- **John Chrysostom: the Preacher (347-407)**
 - Born in Antioch (344). Godly Christian mother
 - ✦ Libanius about his mother: “O gods of Greece, what wonderful women these Christians have!”
 - ✦ Baptized in 370 and became a monk. Lived with Antioch ascetics
 - Presbyter in Antioch (386)
 - ✦ Famed for his preaching (386-397). Nicknamed “Golden mouth” (Chrysostom). Practiced expository preaching focused on plain meaning of text (Matthew, John, Psalms)
 - ✦ Sermons on the “Statues” (387).

Leading Christian Figures



- **John Chrysostom: the Preacher (347-407), cont.**
 - Archbishop of Constantinople (397)
 - ✦ Enforced biblical reforms of church; denounced political corruption and excesses of the rich. Targeted the Empress Eudoxia.
 - ✦ Deposed in 403 for teachings: after earthquake and riots, was restored.
 - ✦ Because of pointed sermons against the Emperor and wife, deposed and exiled in 405.
 - Died 407 in exile
 - ✦ Final words: “Glory be to God in all things.”

Leading Christian Figures



- **Jerome: the Scholar (347-420)**
 - Born into wealthy Christian family (347). Highly educated
 - Baptized and became a Syrian hermit (372). Learned Hebrew. Ordained in Antioch (379)
 - Studied theology in Constantinople and Rome.
 - ✦ At request of Pope Damasus, prepared a new Latin translation of the Bible from the Greek and Hebrew – the Vulgate (common) Bible. A work of vast scholarship, finished in 405. Still the official Roman Catholic Bible.
 - ✦ Discovered that some books in the *Septuagint* (Greek translation of the Bible) were not in the Hebrew Scriptures. These *apocryphal* books (hidden things) were demoted to secondary status. (Overruled by Council of Trent in 1546).



- **Jerome: the Scholar (347-420), cont.**
 - Emphasized monastic lifestyle and attracted children of many influential Romans, especially women. Became unpopular in Rome for scathing attacks on immorality. Fled from Rome in 384 for Jerusalem.
 - Lived in monastery in Bethlehem, writing and teaching monks. Wrote theology, translated theological writings into Latin, engaged in theological and exegetical controversies. Championed monasticism and celibacy.

Leading Christian Figures



• Aurelius Augustine: the Theologian (354-430)

- Born in 354 to pagan father and Christian mother (Monica).
- Trained as lawyer/philosopher
 - ✦ Began living with woman/fathered son (370)
 - ✦ Professor of rhetoric in Carthage (373)
 - ✦ Devoted to Roman philosophy, despised theology of Old Testament. Joined Manichee sect.
- Converted
 - ✦ Monica prayed for years
 - ✦ Appointed to teach in Rome (383) and Milan (384). Influenced by Platonism. Fell under preaching of Ambrose of Milan. Attracted to intellectually strong presentation of Christianity.
 - ✦ Persuaded of Christianity, but struggled to give up sin. Converted (386) by children singing Romans 13:13-14). Baptized with illegitimate son by Ambrose in 387.

Leading Christian Figures



- Aurelius Augustine: the Theologian (354-430)
 - Ministry in North Africa
 - ✦ Founded monastery in 388, that spread monasticism in N. Africa.
 - ✦ Began writing against pagan philosophy. “Forced” to ordain in 391 at Hippo. Assistant to bishop, then bishop (396)
 - ✦ Bishop for 34 years: preacher, pastor, leader, theologian, monastery-builder. Died defending Hippo in 430.
 - Key Writings:
 - ✦ *The Confessions*: Personal account of conversion and struggle with sin.
 - ✦ *City of God*: Christ-centered view of history and defense of Christian after fall of Rome.
 - ✦ *On the Trinity*: Exploration of the mystery, including eternal procession of Spirit from the Son, and “traces” of trinity in things.
 - ✦ *Against the Pelagians*: Pelagius (British monk) objected to Augustine’s grace emphasis, insisted on moral effort for salvation. Denied corruption of Fall.
 - ✦ *Against Donatism*: Church was split by Catholics and Donatists. Augustine won the day for Catholics. Justified persecution.

Controversy over the Natures of Christ



- After Arianism, debate over the natures of Christ.
 - Controversy over Christ's status as God
 - Antiochenes: Emphasized the human, historical figure of Jesus, body and soul – the Savior must be a man.
 - ✦ Distinguished between humanity and deity of Christ.
 - ✦ Did not want his human characteristics applied to his divine nature.
 - ✦ To mix human and divine was to deny or corrupt both.
 - ✦ Tended to sound as if Christ possessed two personalities – two natures, two persons.

Controversy over the Natures of Christ



- After Arianism, debate over the natures of Christ.
 - Alexandrians: Emphasized the divine nature of Jesus – the Savior must be God.
 - ✦ Identity between Christ and God: all that Jesus did, God did.
 - ✦ Divine nature overruling human nature, downplaying humanity of Christ (sometimes denied a human nature and mind, only body).
 - ✦ Tended to sound as if Christ possessed one nature, as one person.
 - Now the question pertained to the human and divine natures within Christ (Christology)

Controversy over the Natures of Christ



- **Proposed Solutions:**

- Apollinaris (300-390, Alexandria): Denied that Christ had a human mind or spirit. A divine mind in a human body. Condemned by Council of Constantinople (381), for denying true and full humanity to Christ.
- Nestorius (381-450, Antioch): Two natures/two persons. Jesus as a man with whom the divine Son united. Mary gave birth to the man Jesus, not to the Son of God.
 - ✦ Opposed by Cyril of Alexandria. Nestorianism condemned by Council of Ephesus (431), along with Pelagianism.
 - ✦ Nestorius' supporters summoned their own council and deposed Cyril (Ephesus II). Emperor Theodosius intervened for Cyril. Nestorianism went to India/China.
 - ✦ Theodosius forced "Formula of Union" on Antioch and Alexandria (433).
- Eutyches (Constantinople). Argued that Christ possessed one nature combining human and divine and one person. Second Council of Ephesus (449) imposed Eutychianism.

Controversy over the Natures of Christ



- **Pope Leo and his “Tome”**
 - Upon request, had written the “Tome” to give his view of the controversy.
 - Bitterly opposed Ephesus II, called it the “Robber Synod.”
 - Argued that there are two natures in Christ (one human, one divine) and one person.

Controversy over the Natures of Christ



- **Council of Chalcedon (451)**
 - Emperor Theodosius died (450), succeeded by pro-Antioch Marcian.
 - Marcian summoned Council of Chalcedon (400 bishops, with ambassadors from Leo in Rome).
 - ✦ When Alexandrians and Antiochenes clashed, Leo's Tome was consulted.
 - ✦ Leo sent message that unless his formula was accepted, Rome would divide.
 - ✦ Leo's formula was accepted and Eutyches was condemned. Church unified around Leo's formula. Ephesus II overruled.

Controversy over the Natures of Christ



- Council of Chalcedon (451)
 - Chalcedonian Formula (or Creed):
 - ✦ “Complete in humanity, truly God and truly man, consisting of a rational soul and body; of the same humanity, like us in all things, apart from sin.”
 - ✦ “One and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-Begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation;... the characteristic property of each nature being preserved...”
 - ✦ “Coming together to form one Person and Hypostasis. He is not split or divided into two persons, but he is one and the same Son, and Only-Begotten, God the Logos, the Lord Jesus Christ.”
- Sample passage: John 4
 - Jesus’ human nature: John 4:6 – “Jesus, wearied as he was from his journey, was sitting beside the well.”
 - Jesus’ divine nature: John 4:17 – “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; for you have had five husbands...”
 - How many persons in John 4? 1 Person (Jesus Christ), 2 Natures (Human and Divine).
 - ✦ Helps explain the cross: God the Son died in his human nature

The Pelagian Controversy



- Pelagius:
 - Moralistic British monk, upset over corruption in Rome
 - Outraged over Augustine's prayer
 - ✦ "Sovereign Lord, grant what you command and command what you will."
 - Taught a heretical doctrine of human nature and sin
 - ✦ Man not corrupted by the Fall; only a bad example
 - ✦ Human free will capable of obeying both law and gospel
 - ✦ Grace is a positive example and a second chance
 - After fall of Rome in 410 traveled to North Africa, entered into controversy with Augustine

The Pelagian Controversy



- **Augustine**
 - Wrote *Anti-Pelagian writings*, emphasizing bondage of the will and sovereign grace in salvation
 - Set theological agenda for salvation doctrine of Western church. Influenced Reformers like Luther and Calvin
- **Outcome:**
 - Pelagius condemned as heretical at Council of Ephesus in 431
 - After Augustine, *semi-Pelagianism* prevailed, mixing grace with human contribution, teaching free will, and denying sovereign predestination.
 - Augustine's doctrine held by a minority throughout the Middle Ages, revived by Protestant Reformation

The Barbarian Invasions & Fall of Rome (476)



- **Visigoths capture and sack Rome (410)**
 - Pagans blamed on Christianity
 - Augustine's *City of God* in response
- **Attila the Hun (d. 453).**
 - Having failed to conquer the Eastern Empire in 434 and 443, rampaged across N. Italy and Gaul.
 - Accepted proposal of marriage from the Roman Emperor's sister and demanded half of the empire as dowry. Invaded Italy in 452. Pope Leo I negotiated peace with Attila.
 - In collapse of political and military situation, the Roman church grew in prestige and power.
- **Vandals attack Roman North Africa (441)**
 - Migrated West through Europe to escape Huns, ultimately crossed from Spain to North Africa.
 - Destroyed North African Church
 - Sacked Rome (455)
 - Augustine died in defense of Hippo (430)
- **Last Roman Emperor (476)**
 - Empire in the West ended
 - Germanic chieftains and kings ruled regions.
 - Clovis, King of the Franks, promised to embrace Christ if granted victory. Succeeded and converted most of France to Christianity.
 - Western Empire fragmented into tribal kingdoms, which became the evangelistic target of the Roman Church.
 - Effective separation of Eastern and Western churches, with Bishop of Rome supreme in West.

The Barbarian Invasions & Fall of Rome (476)



- **Vandals attack Roman North Africa (441)**
 - Migrated West through Europe to escape Huns, ultimately crossed from Spain to North Africa.
 - Destroyed North African Church
 - Sacked Rome (455)
 - Augustine died in defense of Hippo (430)
- **Last Roman Emperor (476)**
 - Empire in the West ended
 - Germanic chieftains and kings ruled regions.
 - Clovis, King of the Franks, promised to embrace Christ if granted victory. Succeeded and converted most of France to Christianity.
 - Western Empire fragmented into tribal kingdoms, which became the evangelistic target of the Roman Church.
 - Effective separation of Eastern and Western churches, with Bishop of Rome supreme in West.