

Age of Imperial Christianity

AD 312 - 590

Part One

- I. Emperor (State) Rules Over the Church
 - A. Constantine (280-337) (The Great)
 1. Was not a Christian, but was tolerant of Christians
 2. Battle of the Milvian Bridge (312)
 - a. Constantine vs. Maxentius
 - b. Had a dream in which the first two letters of the name of Christ, Chi and Rho (X & P) appeared in the shape of a cross
 - c. "By this sign you will conquer"
 - d. Had the Chi-Rho sign painted on the shields
 - e. Won an unexpected, yet complete victory over Maxentius
 3. Became a great champion and protector of Christians (converted to Christianity)
 - B. Constantine's Reforms
 1. Edict of Milan (313)
 - a. Proclamation that permanently established toleration of Christianity
 - b. Christianity given full legal status
 2. Refused to offer thanks to the many "gods" of the Roman Empire
 3. 321 - Passed a law making Sunday the Christian day of Worship
 4. Constructed churches at his own expense
 5. He made Bishops part of the legal structure
 6. Introduced a system of state welfare - (sought to discourage infanticide)
 7. Outlawed crucifixion as a form of capital punishment
 8. Took steps to outlaw the gladiatorial games
 9. Construction of "the City of Constantine" or Constantinople (New Rome)
 - C. Results of His Reforms
 1. Major shift for the church
 - a. Poverty to Wealth
 - b. Persecution to Power
 - c. Obscure to Popular
 2. 380 - Emperor Gratian (West) - Emperor Theodosius (East)
 - a. Christianity became the official religion of the Empire
 - b. Consider to be Christian through affiliation with the church
 - c. Theodosian decrees: Practical ban on paganism
 - d. Dealt harshly with heretics - especially the Arians
 - e. Forced Conversions / Baptisms
 3. Many began to enter the clergy to obtain power/prestige/wealth
 4. People were ruled from the top down
- II. Great Ecumenical Councils of the Early Church (Chart)
 - A. Nicea (325)
 1. Called by Constantine
 2. Issue(s) - Arianism - The Father alone is without beginning or end
 - a. Jesus is not equal with the Father
 - b. He is the first and highest created being
 - c. Homoousia (same substance) - Homoiousia (similar substance)

3. Results
 - a. Christ is homoousia (co-equal, co-substantial)
 - b. Formally condemned Arius
 - * Also dealt with issues regarding the nature of the Holy Spirit
- B. Constantinople (381)
 1. Called by Emperor Theodosius
 2. Issue(s) - Apollinarianism
 - a. Denied the Full Humanity of Christ
 - b. Claimed that the divine Logos took the place of the human mind
 3. Results
 - a. Condemned Apollinarianism as a heresy
 - b. If Christ did not have a human mind, he would not be truly human

- B. Ephesus (431)
 1. Called by Emperor Theodosius II
 2. Issue(s) - Nestorianism
 - a. Denied the unity of the person of Christ (union of natures denied)
 - b. The human nature was completely controlled by the divine nature
 - c. That Jesus is two distinct persons
 3. Results
 - a. If Jesus' were not truly God and truly man, he could not make a true atonement for sin
 - b. Declared Nestorianism heretical

III. The Monastic Movement

- A. The Hermits (Eremia-desert)
 1. Lived alone (for the most part)
 2. Antony (251-356)
- B. The Monks
 1. Lived in Community (Common Life)
 2. Constructed buildings, living areas. Came to be known as Monasteries
 3. Preserved piety and scholasticism
 4. Characteristics
 - a. Renounce worldly property and pleasure
 - b. Be celibate
 - c. Dedicated to prayer, fasting, and Bible study
 5. Two Notable Monks
 - a. Jerome (347-420)
 - (1) Mastered both Hebrew and Greek
 - (2) Spent years in desert seclusion
 - (3) Translated the Bible into Latin (Latin Vulgate)
 - b. Benedict (480-543)
 - (1) Father of Western Monasticism
 - (2) Benedictine Rule (Code of Conduct)
 - (3) 529 - Founded the monastery of Monte Cassino - (Preached - fed the poor - many joined this movement)
 - (4) B & B Brandy
 6. The Nuns
 - a. Community of Christian women dedicated to cultivating spiritual life
 - b. Communities known as nunneries

18. The Ecumenical Councils of the Early Church

LOCATION	DATE	EMPEROR	KEY PARTICIPANTS	MAJOR OUTCOMES
NICEA	325	Constantine	Arius Alexander Eusebius of Nicomedia Eusebius of Caesarea Hosius Athanasius✱	Declared Son <i>homoousios</i> (coequal, consubstantial, and coeternal) with Father. Condemned Arius. Drafted original form of Nicene Creed. Homo = Same; hetero = different; Homooc = Similar
CONSTANTINOPLE	381	Theodosius	Meletius Gregory of Nazianzus Gregory of Nyssa	Confirmed results of Council of Nicea. Produced revised Nicene Creed. Ended Trinitarian Controversy. Affirmed deity of the Holy Spirit. Condemned Apollinarianism. ✓
EPHESUS	431	Theodosius II	Cyril Nestorius	Declared Nestorianism heretical. Accepted by implication Alexandrian Christology. Condemned Pelagius.
CHALCEDON	451	Marcian	Leo I Dioscurus Eutyches	Declared Christ's two natures unmixd, unchanged, undivided, inseparable. Condemned Eutychianism.
CONSTANTINOPLE	553	Justinian	Eutychius	Condemned "Three Chapters" to gain support of Monophysites. Affirmed Cyrillian interpretation of Chalcedon.
CONSTANTINOPLE	680-681	Constantine IV		Rejected Monothelitism. Condemned Pope Honorius (d. 638) as heretical.
NICEA	787	Constantine VI		Declared veneration of icons and statues legitimate.