

## Age of Imperial Christianity

### AD 312 - 590

#### Part Two

#### I. The Theologians

##### A. Athanasius (296-373)

1. Bishop of Alexandria (Egypt)
2. Did more than any other in affirming and explaining the deity of Christ
3. Instrumental in standing against Arius at the Council of Nicaea
4. Was banished and restored at least five times over the issue of Arianism - "Athanasius Contra Mundum"
5. "Incarnation of the Logos" - "Orations against Arians"

##### B. Ambrose (339-397)

1. Bishop of Milan
2. Exceptional Preaching
3. Determined stance against Arianism
4. Pioneer Hymn writer - introduced congregational singing
5. Close friend with Emperor Theodosius
6. "The church belongs to God, therefore, it cannot be assigned to Caesar. The emperor is within the church and not above it."

##### C. John Chrysostum (344-407)

1. Said to be the greatest preacher of the early church ("Golden Mouth")
2. Preached verse by verse (Expository)
3. Exegetical and Practical
4. Denounced sin among believers and criticized worldly compromise
5. "On bringing up children" - First known attempt to set-up programs for the education of the young
6. Made lots of enemies both inside and outside the church - due to his preaching

##### D. Augustine (354-430)

1. Bishop of Hippo (Africa)
2. Regarded as the greatest theologian to arise in the church since the Apostle Paul
3. Major writings
  - a. Confessions (Autobiography)
  - b. City of God
4. Strongly opposed Donatism
5. Strongly opposed Pelagianism (Handout)

#### II. Mission of Barbarian Tribes

##### A. Fall of the Roman Empire (410) (In the West)

1. Rome sacked by the Visigoths (Germanic Tribe) - Overthrew emperor (387)
2. Visigoths converted from Paganism to Arianism - eventually to orthodox Christianity
3. Other Germanic tribes also converted from Paganism to Arianism
  - a. Ostrogoths (Western Germans)

- b. Vandals
- c. Lombards

B. Adopted Roman Civilization (By and Large)

C. Conversion of Clovis

- 1. Frankish King (France)
- 2. Converted to Christianity
- 3. His conversion led to the conversion of many other Franks . . .

III. Arisal of the Papacy

\* Many Factors Involved (See Chart)

A. Damascus I (305-384)

- 1. Bishop of Rome
- 2. Flavian (Patriarch of Constantinople) wanted the East to have primacy over the West
- 3. "The Holy Roman Church takes precedence over all other churches . . . It was given primacy by the words of our Lord and redeemer Jesus Christ."
- 4. Matthew 16:18 - "Rock" means Peter, who died in Rome - was the head of the Apostles
- 5. Churches did not readily receive this - until Leo I

B. Leo I - (400-461)

- 1. "Founder" of the papacy
- 2. Believed that Christ appointed the apostle Peter as the senior bishop
- 3. The entire church should accept all doctrinal statements by Peter's successors (the popes of Rome)
- 4. Bravely stood up to the Huns and Vandals pleading with them not to destroy Rome
- 5. Beloved by the people

C. Gregory the Great (540-604)

- 1. Recognized as the first (official) pope (590)
- 2. Political Leadership
  - a. Made treaties with invaders and brought peace to Italy
  - b. Established an important relationship with the Franks
  - c. Cared for refugees
  - d. Made the papacy into a powerful social and political institution
- 3. Church Leadership
  - a. Battled against Manichaeism, Donatism, and Arianism
  - b. Fought against the title of "universal" or "ecumenical" patriarch
  - c. Although, he believed that Rome held the highest place of honor (first among equals) among the five patriarchs
  - d. Called himself "the servant of the servants of God"
- 4. Theology
  - a. Devout disciple of Augustine, but blended Augustine's theology with other popular beliefs
  - b. Taught that people were born sinful and that Christ alone by sovereign grace can rescue sinners

- c. Salvation comes through Baptism - as the Holy Spirit causes the sinner to be spiritually reborn (Baptism Regeneration)
- d. The Christian must make up for sins committed after baptism by works of love
- e. Holy communion had the power to take away post baptismal sin
- f. At death, remaining sin had to be paid for in a place of purification (purgatory)
- g. Introduced the practice of celebrating special communion services for the dead, hastening passage from purgatory to heaven

5. Worship

- a. Opposed the veneration of images, but approved of them as teaching aids for those who could not read
- b. Introduced hymns into worship - to be sung responsively ("Gregorian chant")

IV. Baptismal Regeneration

A. Cyril of Jerusalem (310-386) (350)

- 1. Clergy begin to wear special vestments
- 2. Use of incense
- 3. Carrying of lights, etc. . . .

B. Baptism

- 1. Participants - publicly renounced Satan
- 2. Professed faith in God (Trinity)
- 3. Anointed with oil
- 4. Immersed three times
- 5. Anointed with oil again
- 6. Clothed in white garments
- 7. Took part in communion for the first time
- 8. Baptisms mainly took place around Easter and Pentecost

C. Baptismal Regeneration (Cyril's Lectures)

- 1. Called baptism "the bath of regeneration"
- 2. Three main effects of baptism
  - a. Washed away the guilt of all sins committed before baptism
  - b. It sanctified the baptized person, conferring on him spiritual union with Christ, the gift of the Spirit, and adoption as God's child
  - c. It impressed a "seal" or permanent mark on the soul of the person baptized

## 12. Development of Episcopacy in the First Five Centuries

PERIOD	SOURCES	DESCRIPTION
1st century	New Testament	Elder-bishops and deacons in each church were under the supervision of the apostles.
Early 2nd century	Ignatius	Elders and bishops were differentiated. Each congregation was governed by bishop, elders, and deacons.
Late 2nd century	Irenaeus Tertullian	Diocesan bishops—a bishop now oversaw a group of congregations in a geographical area; they were thought to be successors of the apostles.
Mid-3rd century	Gyprian	Priesthood and sacrifice. Elders (presbyteros) come to be seen as sacrificing priests. Primacy of bishop of Rome was asserted.
Early 4th century	Council of Nicea	Metropolitan bishops (archbishops) by virtue of their location in population centers gained ascendancy over <i>chorepiscopi</i> (country bishops).
Late 4th century	Council of Constantinople	Patriarchs. Special honor was given to the bishops of Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople, and Jerusalem. Patriarch of Constantinople was given primacy next to the bishop of Rome.
Mid-5th century	Leo I Council of Chalcedon	The supremacy of Rome—Leo I claimed authority over the whole church on the basis of succession from Peter.

## 13. Factors Contributing to the Supremacy of the Bishop of Rome

FACTOR	RESULT
MATTHEW 16:17-19	Papal claims rest on the assertion that Peter was given authority by Jesus over the entire church. This claim was first made by Leo I.
APOSTOLIC SUCCESSION	The teaching that the apostles passed on their authority to their successors led to the conclusion that Peter's supreme authority had been perpetuated in the bishops of Rome.
MARTYRDOM OF PETER AND OF PAUL	With the rise of the veneration of martyred saints, Rome gained prestige as the site of the deaths of the two principal apostles. The persecution under Nero also gave to the Roman church a special prominence by virtue of its suffering.
POPULATION OF ROME	Both the size of the city and the size of the church contributed to the authority of the bishop.
IMPERIAL CAPITAL	After the Edict of Milan, the emperors often sought advice on religious matters from the bishops of Rome.
LANGUAGE	The Latin-speaking West, led by the bishop of Rome, was often able to cut through the knotty theological dilemmas that incapacitated the Greek-speaking East, because of the lesser ability of the Latin language to express subtle shades of meaning.
LOGATION	Of the five patriarchal cities, only Rome was in the West; thus the bishop of Rome exercised authority over much more territory than the other patriarchs did.
MISSIONARY OUTREACH	The bishops of Rome, such as Gregory I, encouraged successful missionary work among the barbarian tribes, who then looked to Rome with great respect. The Eastern patriarchs were much less successful in evangelizing the Persians and later the Muslims.
BARBARIAN INVASIONS	The collapse of the Western Empire under the barbarian invasions left the church as the major integrating force in society—in the empire as well as among the "Christian" barbarians.
MUSLIM CONQUEST	The loss of the territories of the patriarchs of Antioch, Alexandria, and Jerusalem to Islam and the continual pressure exerted against Constantinople also increased the authority of the Roman bishop.

## 17. The Pelagian Controversy

POSITION	MAJOR PROponents	SUMMARY
PELAGIANISM	Pelagius Julian of Eclanum Coelestius	Man is born essentially good and capable of doing what is necessary for salvation.
AUGUSTINIANISM	Augustine of Hippo	Man is dead in sin; salvation is totally by the grace of God, which is given only to the elect.
SEMI-PELAGIANISM	John Cassian	The grace of God and the will of man work together in salvation, in which man must take the initiative.
SEMI-AUGUSTINIANISM	Caesarius of Arles	The grace of God comes to all, enabling a person to choose and perform what is necessary for salvation.