

Church History



Church History

- *Introduction to Church History*
- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
- *The Early Middle Ages* AD 6th-10th centuries
- *The Age of Crusades* AD 11th-13th centuries
- *The Renaissance* AD 14th-15th centuries
- *Conquest and Reformation* AD 16th century
- *The Age of Enlightenment* AD 17th-18th centuries
- *The Age of Revolution* AD 19th century
- *The Modern Age* AD 20th century
- *The Postmodern Age* AD 21st century



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- *The Ancient Church* AD 1st-3rd centuries
- *The Rise of Christendom* AD 4th-5th centuries
 - *Constantine: The Thirteenth Apostle*
 - *The First Ecumenical Council*
 - *The Constantinian Line*
 - *The Establishment of Christendom*
 - *The Second Ecumenical Council*



The Rise of Christendom

- Living out the new Christendom
378 Theodosius became Emperor
 - He issued the Edict of Thessalonica, which in 380 legally declared Nicene Christianity to be the state religion of the Roman Empire
 - How was this both good *and* bad for the Church?
 - How should we perceive the importance of Christians in influential government positions today?



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The Rise of Christendom

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - The modern term, “episcopal see,” comes from the Latin “*episcopalis sedes*”—literally, the “seat of the bishop”
 - By this point in history, area bishops had literal *thrones* that they sat in to *govern* from, such as this one in Thessalonica
 - If you'll remember, Pope Stephen was executed back in 257 during the Emperor Valerian's purge while he was physically sitting on the papal throne



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 - So an “episcopal see” is literally talking about the seat of a bishop's power—but even that English phrase has become synonymous with seeing the “seat” as the focal point of control
 - FYI—the Greek word for “seat” is “*cathedra*” (“*καθέδρα*”), which is why we speak of the special church buildings built for bishops as “cathedrals” (since they hold the official episcopal throne for that geographical area) and we speak of the Pope's infallibility when he speaks “*ex cathedra*”—literally, “from his throne”
 - But the *Pope's* throne looks like this
 - In fact, an “early Christendom” word used for installing bishops was “enthroning”



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 - Suddenly, the see was up for grabs
 - Theodosius put Nicene theologian Gregory of Nazianzus (former bishop of Sasima) on the episcopal throne
 - But if you'll remember, the Nicene canons strictly *forbade* bishops or pastors to switch their congregations (so, ironically, the first main act of returning to Nicene Christianity was to ignore Nicene Christianity)



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 - Theodosius put Nicene theologian Gregory of Nazianzus (former bishop of Sasima) on the episcopal throne
 - Gregory's former disciple, Maximus of Alexandria, jumped in to take the throne
 - He and his Egyptian supporters broke into the cathedral at night, where they covertly consecrated *him* to be the *true* bishop of Constantinople
 - He was in the process of being tonsured when authorities broke in



The Rise of Christendom

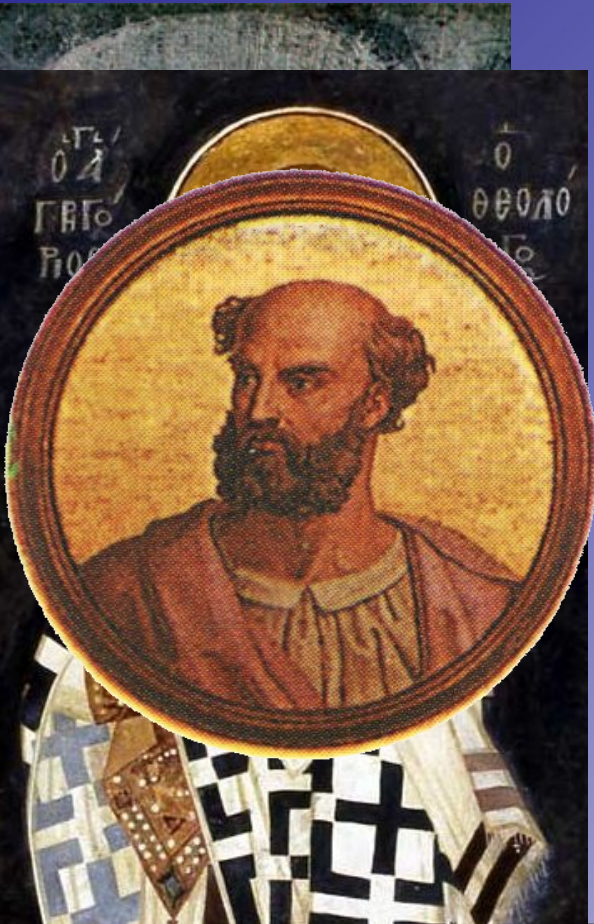
- Funky little teaching moment—
 - The term “tonsured” refers to a ceremonial cutting of the hair by monks, priests, bishops, etc. (from the Latin word, “*tonsura*,” meaning “to shear,” or “to cut”)
 - Though various world religions practice ritual hair cutting, according to the Eastern Orthodox Church, the Christian version of it comes from interpreting Paul's vow in Acts 18:18 as an act of priestly consecration
 - According to Roman Catholicism, tradition says that it was begun by Peter



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 - Gregory's former disciple, Maximus of Alexandria, jumped in to take the throne
 - Pope Damasus denounced Maximus, but asked Theodosius to convene a new Council to decide the matter, since he was also uncomfortable with Gregory's non-Nicene-compliant appointment
 - What precedent(s) did *that* set?



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The Second Ecumenical Council began

- The Egyptian and Macedonian bishops (who had supported Maximus) refused to recognize Gregory as a valid fellow bishop
- In one of the first actions of the Council, Gregory offered to resign his position in order to heal the schism that was forming
 - In an impassioned speech, he cried out, "Let me be as the Prophet Jonah! I was responsible for the storm, but I would sacrifice myself for the salvation of the ship. Seize me and throw me!"
 - He then left the proceedings and returned to his native Nazianzus, where he served as bishop *there*, but the issue of Maximus still remained to be dealt with



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- The end result of Council was the issuing of six or seven canons (depending on which historian you accept), among them being

- 1) The absolute condemnation of all versions of Arianism still out there

- But the last bits of Arianism still stubbornly clung to life among the churches in Britain and Gaul



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- 2) “Let not bishops go beyond their dioceses

(Note: our word “diocese” comes from the Greek word “*διοίκησις*” or “*dioíkēsis*,” which literally means “housekeeping,” which had by then become synonymous with the idea of “administration”—so a diocese is simply the administrative area governed by a bishop's episcopal see)



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- 1) The absolute condemnation of all versions of Arianism still out there
- 2) "Let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited..."

- This essentially reaffirmed the Nicene rules against switching churches and dioceses

- But that last qualifier *does* tweak the Nicene regulation a bit, doesn't it?



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- 1) The absolute condemnation of all versions of Arianism still out there
- 2) "Let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited..."

- 3) "The Bishop of Constantinople... shall have the prerogative of honor after the Bishop of Rome, since Constantinople is New Rome..."

- How would the *Eastern* churches have appreciated this bit?
- What precedent does it set to say that the preeminent churches are those which exist where the secular government is the most prominent?



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- 3) "The Bishop of Constantinople... shall have the prerogative of honor after the Bishop of Rome, since Constantinople is New Rome..."
- 4) "It is decreed that **Maximus never was and is not now a Bishop; that those who have been ordained by him are in no order whatever of the clergy...**"



The Rise of Christendom

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - The Second Ecumenical Council also reaffirmed the Nicene Creed, but in doing so, they also decided to “tweak” it a bit
(Note: several scholars wonder about this, since there's no clear documentation of this 381 form until it was later referenced at the Council of Chalcedon in 451—but there's really no reason to believe that the later Council just deceptively “invented” it, since it was considered authoritative at the time)



The Rise of Christendom

Original Nicene Creed of 325

- We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of all things visible and invisible.
- And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, the *only-begotten*; that is, of the essence of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God—*begotten*, not *made*—being of one substance with the Father;
 - By whom all things were made, both in heaven and on earth;
 - Who for us men, and for our salvation, came down and was incarnate and was made man;
 - He suffered, and the third day he rose again, ascended into heaven;
- From thence he shall come to judge the living and the dead.
- And in the Holy Spirit.
- But those who say: "There was a time when he was not;" and "He was not before he was made;" and "He was made out of nothing," or "He is of another substance" or "essence," or "The Son of God is created," or "changeable," or "alterable"—they are condemned by the holy catholic and apostolic Church. Amen.

"Tweaked" Nicene Creed of 381

- We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.
- And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the *only-begotten* Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God—*begotten*, not *made*—being of one substance with the Father;
 - by whom all things were made;
 - who for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnated by the Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary, and was made man;
 - he was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried, and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures, and ascended into heaven, and now sits on the right hand of the Father;
 - from thence he shall come again, with glory, to judge the living and the dead;
 - whose kingdom shall have no end.
- And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke through the prophets.
- In one holy catholic and apostolic Church; we acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; we look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.



The Rise of Christendom

- Funky little teaching moment—

- The Second Ecumenical Council also reaffirmed the Nicene Creed, but in doing so, they also decided to “tweak” it a bit

- Two centuries later, Latin-speaking churches added one word to this creed—“*Filioque*”—that precipitated the split between East and West

- The original “tweaked” creed read, “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father...”

- The “*tweaked tweaked*” version read, “And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father *and the Son*...”

- How does that change things?

- The Latin churches pointed to verses like John 20:22 to support the argument that the Spirit was subordinate to the Son

- The Greek churches argued that
 - a) this changed the nature of the Trinity
 - b) this was a unilateral action by the Latin churches, and thus a slap in the face to the Greek ones

- No one went home happy



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Ulfilas finished his Gothic Bible

- Back in 311, Ulfilas was born to parents who had been enslaved by the pagan Goths
 - His father secretly raised him as an Arian Christian, teaching him Latin, Greek, and the Gothic language
 - He became so proficient at languages that he became an official interpreter in the Gothic court
 - In 350, Ulfilas secretly began working on a translation of the Bible into the Gothic language



The Rise of Christendom

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - The Goths had no written language, as such—just a basic rune script that expressed simple concepts—and had tons of tribal dialects

ΑΚΑΙΤΑΙΗΑΒΑΙΦ ΝΙΝΑΝΝΑΜΑΓ
ΚΑΣΑΣΥΙΝΨΙΣΓΑΛΕΙΦΑΝΔΣΙΝΓΑΡΑ
ΙΣΥΙΑΥΑΝ. ΝΙΒΑΡΑΙΟΥΚΨΙΣΦΑΝΑ
ΣΥΙΝΦΑΝΓΑΒΙΝΔΙΦ. ΓΑΗΦΑΝΑ
ΓΑΚΩΙΣΣΙΣΥΙΑΥΑΙ. ΑΜΕΝΟΥΨΑ
ΙΖΥΙΣΨΑΤΕΙΑΜΑΤΑΡΑΕΤΑΔΑΨΑΤΑ
ΥΑΝΚΙΤΕΣΙΝΝΙΝΑΝΝΕΓΑΝΝΑ
ΤΕΙΝΔΣΣΥΑΝΑΝΑΓΔΣΣΥΑΣΥΕΥΑ
ΓΑΜΕΚΑΝΔ. ΑΨΦΑΝΣΑΕΙΥΑΓΑ
ΜΕΚΕΙΦΑΝΝΑΝΥΕΙΗΑΝΑ. ΝΙΗΑ
ΒΑΙΦΕΚΑΛΕΤΑΙΥ. ΑΚΣΚΙΔΑΙΣΤ
ΑΙΥΕΙΝΑΙΖΔΣΕΚΑΥΑΝΚΗΤΑΙΣ. ΠΗ
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ΓΑΗΣΕΤΟΝΒΙΝΑΝΑΝΑΓΕΙ. ΟΕ
ΨΟΝΦΑΝΔΠΗΜΑΣΑΙΑΙΦΕΙΦΕΙ
ΝΑΓΑΗΒΚΑΨΚΓΗΣΦΕΙΝΑΙ. ΓΑΗ

- So Ulfilas not only translated the Greek Bible into the Gothic language, he also created a uniform Germanic language that all the various Gothic tribes could speak, and a written script (incorporating Greek letters and Gothic runes) for them to use to communicate—all so that he could produce a Bible for his captors



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- Interestingly, to contrast the warlike nature of his captors, Ulfilas consciously omitted any reference to war in the Bible—including omitting the Books of Kings entirely
 - Nonetheless, his (edited) Bible became the first publication of the Word of God outside of the Mediterranean basin, and opened the Gospel message up to an entirely new people group

