

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



The Ancient Church

- The Second Century saw the beginnings of power struggles with Rome, and the endings of power struggles with Judaism
- 117 Hadrian becomes emperor after Trajan
- He's a strong and ethical leader who expands the borders of Rome
- Note, however, that Rome ends halfway up the island of Britain



Publius Aelius Traianus
Hadrianus Augustus
(aka "Hadrian")



The Ancient Church

- Funky little teaching moment—
 - Rome was at its military height at the beginning of the Second Century, and only two people groups really refused to be conquered—the Picts and the Jews
 - The Picts (from the Latin “*picti*,” or “*painted ones*”) were a savage tribe of headhunters who lived in what is now called Scotland
 - (Ironically, “Scotland” was named after the *Scoti*, the Irish Celts who later raided the coastline so successfully that they eventually *supplanted* the Picts)



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 - The Picts worshipped death and darkness, and so not only were they not *afraid* to die, but they actually *welcomed* it
 - One would fling himself naked onto a Roman spear so that the *next* one could be *assured* of killing the Roman
 - This sort of battle by attrition completely *shocked* the Romans... and actually *frightened* them



The Ancient Church

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 - Rome was at its military height at the beginning of the Second Century, and only two people groups really refused to be conquered—the Picts and the Jews
 - So Hadrian built a wall across the entire island in 122 and declared that “here ends Rome,” abandoning Scotland to the savages
 - Remnants of Hadrian's Wall can still be seen today



The Ancient Church

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 - Rome was at its military height at the beginning of the Second Century, and only two people groups really refused to be conquered—the Picts and the Jews
 - The Jews were another matter—they refused to let go of their Judaism
 - They stood against Rome *and* Christianity
 - In 120, Rabbi Tarfon (from Jamnia) called on all synagogues to burn every scrap of Christian writing they could find (even though that would require burning the name of God that's written in them)
 - Polycarp responded in his *Letter to the Philippians* by saying, “Everyone who does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is an antichrist, and whoever does not confess the testimony of the cross is from the devil...”



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 - Hadrian visited the ruins of Jerusalem, which had been burned by Titus in 70 AD
 - He decided to rebuild it as a Roman outpost for his troops, rechristening it, “*Aelia Capitolina*” (named after himself and Jupiter)
 - He built a temple to Venus on top of the tomb of Christ to thwart Christian worship, and a temple to Jupiter on top of the ruins of Herod's Temple to thwart Jewish worship
 - How well did *that* go over?



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 - Note: it's telling that, according to rabbinic tradition, Hadrian had planned to rebuild Jerusalem and its Temple for the Jews, but then a mean-spirited *Samaritan* convinced him to do otherwise...



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 - The Jews were another matter—they refused to let go of their Judaism
 - In 132, the Jews again rebelled against Rome, led by Simon bar Kokhba (whom many rabbis declared the true *Messiah*... ironically, breaking their own rule from the Council of Jamnia)
 - Bar Kokhba took the title *Nasi Israel* (“prince of Israel” and announced a new “Era of the redemption of Israel,” even minting his own new coins
 - Rome was surprised, and it took time to call in more troops and root out the leadership (think Vietnam)—so Bar Kokhba ended up ruling for two and a half years



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 - But Hadrian decided to end the Jewish problem once and for all
 - 580,000 Jews were killed, and over 1000 towns were destroyed
 - The study of the Torah was prohibited (and one was ceremonially burned on the Temple mount), and Jewish scholars were executed
 - Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem, and Judea was officially renamed “Syria Palæstina” (after the *Philistines*)



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 - And, one more time, the Jews were forcibly dispersed from their own homeland. There is no significant Jewish presence in Judea from 135 to 1948—that's 1,813 years...
 - This essentially breaks apart any central power structure for Judaism, and removes them from the board in terms of their persecution of Christianity



The Ancient Church

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Hadrian becomes emperor after Trajan

- So how does all of this set the stage for Christianity in the Second Century—or in the *Twenty-First Century*?

