

# ***Church History***



# Church History

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



# The Ancient Church

- The Third Century was a time of massive crisis in the world
  - 253 Valerian became emperor
    - To show his strength of character compared to his weak predecessor, Gallus, he did what emperors had done for years—he persecuted the Christians
      - In 257, he issued an edict that called for the immediate execution of all Christian leadership
        - This mass purge included Cyprian as well as Pope Stephen, and even the current *anti-pope*, Novatian, who had taught that there is no forgiveness of sins *except* through baptism, and no recourse for a subsequent *re-baptism*—thus, no sins can be forgiven that are committed *after* one is baptised
          - Under Novatian, the ritual of “last rites” gained more of a following



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Valerian lost the Battle of Edessa

- He went to Persian king Shapur I to negotiate a peace treaty, but Shapur simply took him captive instead
  - Shapur tortured and humiliated him, using the Roman emperor as his personal stepstool, etc.
  - Eventually, Shapur had him flayed alive (Valerian's skin was stuffed with straw and kept on display in the Persian royal court for years)
- On his death, Valerian's son, Gallienus, became the new emperor



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- The reign of Gallienus was beset by revolts and secessions
  - Ingenuus, governor of Pannonia (later Hungary), declared himself emperor
  - The Alamanni (later Germans) invaded Italy, making it all the way to the outskirts of Rome itself
  - Regalianus, commander of Illyricum (later Albania and Bosnia), declared *himself* emperor
  - Roman general Postumus declared Germania, Britannia, Hispania, and Gaul to be his own empire (later known as the Gallic Empire)



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- After the Battle of Edessa, Fulvius Macrianus kept King Shapur I from advancing any *further* into Turkey... so he thus decided to declare his *own* sons joint emperors of the region

- Even the prefect of Egypt, Aemilianus, declared *himself* emperor

- Note: *all* of these events happened within the *first year* of Gallienus' reign



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- In 261, Gallienus (who didn't care much for religion of any kind—or religious in-fighting) issued a decree that Christians should be allowed to worship in peace, and that their property should be returned to them, never to be confiscated again
- For the first time, Christianity was officially *legalized* in Rome



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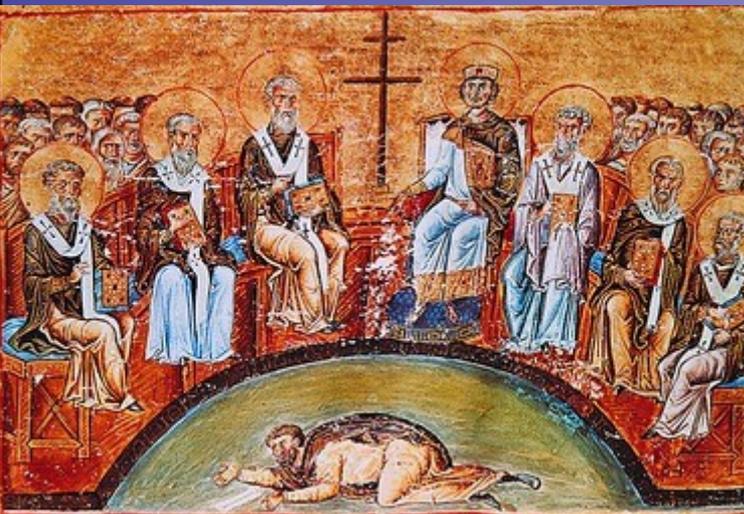
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- The reign of Gallienus was beset by revolts and secessions
  - Toward the end of his reign, he was beset by attacks by the Germanic Heruli tribe on the northeast, Roman cavalry commander Claudius II in the east, and Roman general Aureolus in Italy itself (who was technically supposed to be guarding an exiled Postumus)
  - In the end, in 268, Gallienus was killed by conspirators within his own troops, and his entire family was immediately assassinated by the Senate



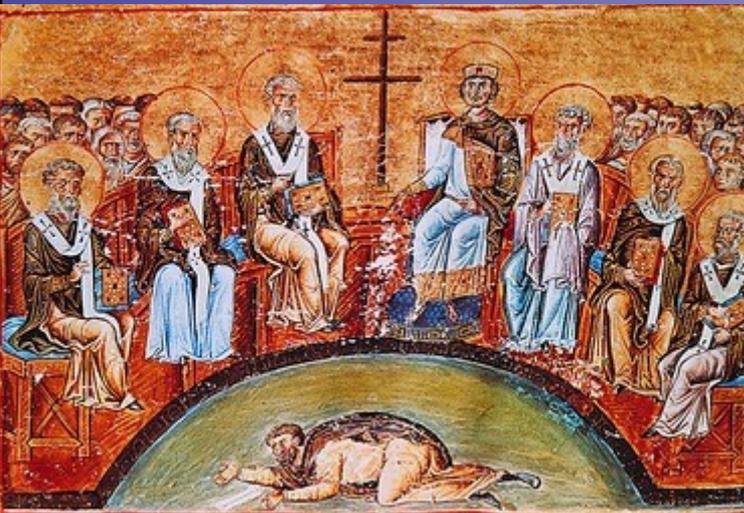
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  - 264-269 Three synods were held in Antioch
    - They condemned Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch, rightly accusing him of preaching adoptionism (the belief that Jesus was a good human being who was only *adopted* by God at His baptism and given divine power)
    - In the process, they also condemned the word, “ὁμοούσιος” (“*homooúsios*”), meaning “same substance” (i.e.; that Jesus was of the same substance as—and thus equal to—God the Father)
      - (not because they didn't agree that He was, but because the term itself had come out of a pagan Greek philosophical context)



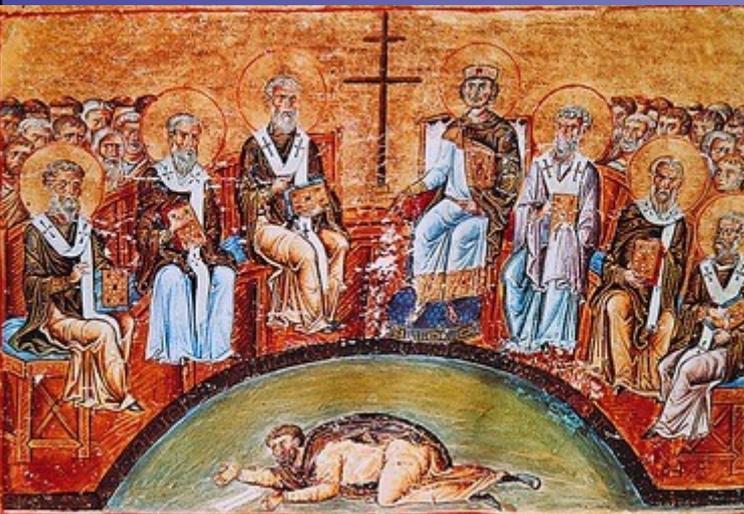
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    - Paul had used the term this way—
      - “The Saviour became holy and just; and by struggle and hard work overcame the sins of our forefather [Adam]. By these means he succeeded in perfecting himself, and was through his moral excellence united with God; having attained unity and sameness [*homooúsios*] of will and energy with Him through his advances in the path of good deeds”



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    - Ironically, roughly sixty years later, “*homooúsios*” became the word fought for at the Council of Nicaea



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    - In illiterate man who grew up in lower Egypt, Anthony took Christ's words in Matthew 19:21 to heart, and gave away all of his possessions to go live in the Nitrian Desert, to the west of Alexandria
    - Athanasius says that he was tempted by Satan with "with boredom, laziness, and the phantoms of women," but he was able to resist the temptations through the power of prayer



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    - After several decades of living alone in the desert (and, later, in the ruins of a Roman fort), he had become a famous figure in the Church for his asceticism
      - In fact, he only left his for to go into Alexandria, so that he could pick a fight with the Roman governor there in order to get tortured and killed as a martyr... which, ironically, didn't end up working...



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    - He went back to his fort, dejected at not having been tortured and killed, only to find that people flocked to him to hear his teachings as an enlightened master
      - Soon, *hundreds* of people were living with him in the desert (even though he tried *repeatedly* to ditch them), and the first Christian monastery was formed—now known as the Monastery of Saint Anthony the Great



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  - 276 Mani preached in Persia
    - While all of this was going on, Mani continued to preach Manicheanism, which now rivalled Christianity in scope
    - Where Christianity tended to draw in the masses, Manicheanism tended to attract the soldiers and leaders—who were drawn to its “warrior” message
      - Nonetheless, Mani failed to convert Persian king Bahram I, who had him crucified for preaching against the native religions of the region



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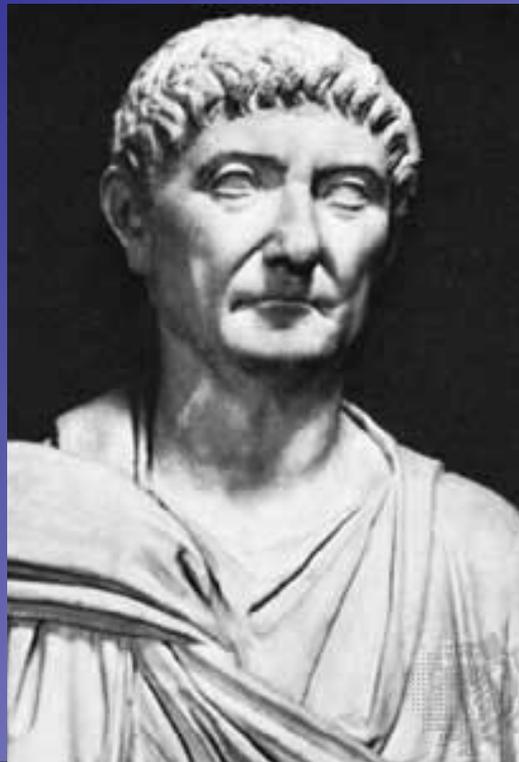
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- Where Christianity tended to draw in the masses, Manicheanism tended to attract the soldiers and leaders—who were drawn to its “warrior” message
- **But, much like with Christianity, this didn't stop the movement, which continued to grow and flourish under persecution**
  - They were even included in Roman emperor Diocletian's persecution of Christians, once he came to power



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  - 284 Diocletian became emperor
    - His predecessor, Aurelian, had fought off the Goths and Alamanni, tightening the Roman borders and restoring their lost territories, so all that was left was to deal with internal conflicts



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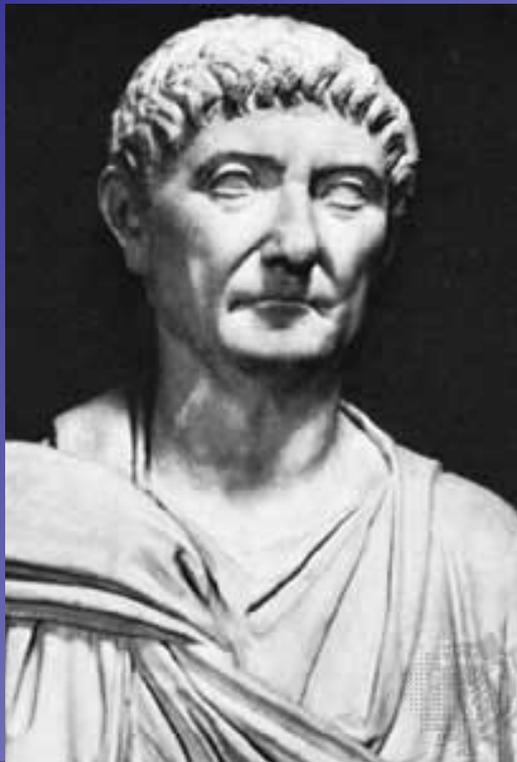
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- His predecessor, Aurelian, had fought off the Goths and Alamanni, tightening the Roman borders
- In 285, Diocletian split the administrative duties of the Empire into West and East—he ruled the East from Nicomedia, and his friend, Maximian, ruling the West from Rome



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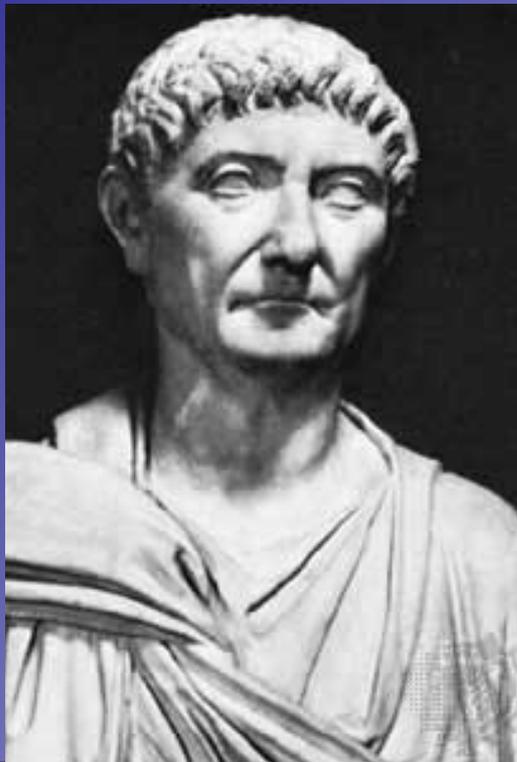
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- His predecessor, Aurelian, had fought off the Goths and Alamanni, tightening the Roman borders
- In 285, Diocletian split the administrative duties of the Empire into West and East
- **After 50 years of “Crisis of the Third Century,”** with insurgencies, multiple competing emperors, etc., Diocletian wanted to show that he was a strong, conservative emperor, so he persecuted the Christians—the worst, most comprehensive persecution so far



# *The Ancient Church*

- Diocletian and the Great Persecution
  - Unlike Aurelian, Diocletian didn't try to build a cult around himself—he saw himself as a reformer (or better yet, a “restorer”)
    - So he wanted to restore Rome back to an earlier, stronger time, when they all worshipped the same pantheon of gods
      - Porphyry—one of his advisors—wrote a 15-volume book called *Against the Christians*, where he complained about their rapid growth (roughly 10% of the Roman Empire was now Christian), about Christ's disdain toward the rich and powerful, and about how blasphemous it was to worship a human being instead of the gods



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      - The omen-readers in Diocletian's army said that the reason they were having trouble reading omens about battles was that there were too many “profane Christians” amongst the soldier who were crossing themselves during the ceremony and thus disrespecting the gods
        - Diocletian therefore demanded that all soldiers make sacrifices to the gods, or else face a dishonorable discharge



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    - By 301, Diocletian began a campaign of arresting all Manicheans and publicly burning their leaders alive, arguing that “Ancient religion ought not to be criticized by a new-fangled one”



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      - By 301, Diocletian began a campaign of arresting all Manicheans
      - At the Feast of Terminus in 303, he ordered that Christianity be terminated in the Roman Empire
        - Wholesale legal action was taken against the church—
          - All Christian property was to be seized, all Scriptures were to be burned, and all places of worship were to be razed



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        - Christians were forbidden to congregare
        - Christians were removed from public office and stripped of rank (even veterans no longer serving in the military)
        - Christians were not allowed to *petition* courts, nor to respond to claims made *against* them in any courts



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        - When a Nicomedian man named Eutius protested the edict as being too harsh, he was arrested for treason, tortured, and burned alive
          - This became the common method of dealing with Christians, especially in the Eastern Empire



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        - Roman prisons quickly filled to over-capacity, and conditions were foul



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      - **A third edict offered freedom to any Christian leader who would perform public sacrifices to the gods**



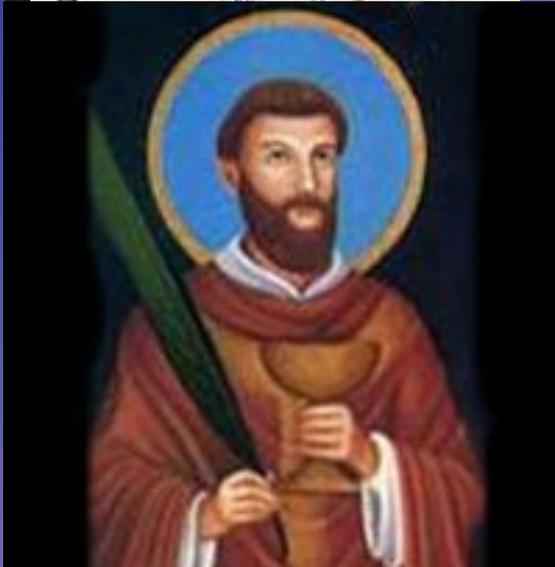
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      - A third edict offered freedom to any Christian leader who would perform public sacrifices
      - **A fourth edict demanded that all Romans—men, women, and children—assemble in their public squares and perform sacrifices to the Roman gods**
        - **Anyone who refused was executed**



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    - So he wanted to restore Rome back to an earlier, stronger time, when they all worshipped the same pantheon of gods
      - Two case studies stand out that year—
        - The Pope at the time—Marcellinus—caved in under the pressure and actually surrendered all of Rome's holy books, and then he himself offered incense to the Roman gods
          - (To his credit, he did later *recant* his earlier recanting, and he was thus executed the next year)



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        - A soldier named Georgius from Syria Palestine, on the other hand, stood fast
          - Diocletian respected him so much that he'd personally made him one of his imperial guards in Nicomedia—a *tribune*, in fact
          - But Georgius publicly denounced the edict (publicly asking Diocletian to rescind it), publicly declared himself a Christian, and called other soldiers to accept Christ as well



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          - Diocletian personally begged him to recant—he even offered him *bribes* to recant—but Georgius still refused
          - Diocletian had Georgius slowly tortured to death—including being sliced to ribbons on a wheel of swords
            - He eventually died by beheading



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        - A soldier named Georgius from Syria Palestine, on the other hand, stood fast
          - Eventually known as St. George, he became venerated as a soldier saint across Europe, including even far-off England—where the legend of his slaying a dragon in the Holy Land became part of classical British folklore
          - Note: he *absolutely* did not look like *this*



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          - Crusaders later wore St. George's cross on their surcoats, wanting to both honor and emulate him
            - (it wasn't really George's cross—it was the flag of *Ambrose*, bishop of Milan... but since Milan's patron saint was eventually St. George, crusaders made the association with *him*)



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      - Two case studies stand out that year—
        - So here's the question for the day: how would *you* have responded to the Great Persecution—like Georgius, or like Marcellinus?
          - How *do* you respond to pressure to conform to those around you?

