

# ***Church History***



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- *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



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- *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
  - *Constantine: The Thirteenth Apostle (part 2)*



# ***The Rise of Christendom***

- Constantine desired to see one, unified Church—and so he *institutionalized* it  
314 Constantine convened Council of Arles
  - This excommunicated the Donatists, but it also was the first *state*-convened Church synod
    - Think about the precedent that this action created
    - Modern theologians even refer to this precedent as the “Constantinian Shift”





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- Constantine named Sunday a day of rest
  - This was strongly supported by all of the Christian bishops, but it had nothing to do with Christianity
    - The day was actually in honor of *Sol Invictus*—the Unconquered Sun (hence the day's name, Sun-day)
    - Constantine had always had a close affinity for the worship of the sun
      - Constantine's father had been a follower of the sun god, Apollo
      - And Constantine had seen a vision of Apollo in 310, telling him that he would conquer the world



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      - Constantine had always had a close affinity for the worship of the sun
        - He minted more coins with “Sol Invictus” printed on them than any other Roman emperor before or since
        - He even made sure that his own triumphal arch was positioned so that the huge Colossus Solis (statue of the sun god) formed its background as you entered the courtyard of the Colosseum that was named after it





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        - The Church later syncretized much of the Sol Invictus cult with Christianity, such as taking the pagan *Saturnalia* festival—that culminated each year in the *Birthday of Sol Invictus* celebration on December 25—and turning it into a mass honoring the birth of Christ
          - (Note: this carving is from the Vatican, which cited Mal. 4:2 to refer to Jesus as the “Sun of Righteousness”)



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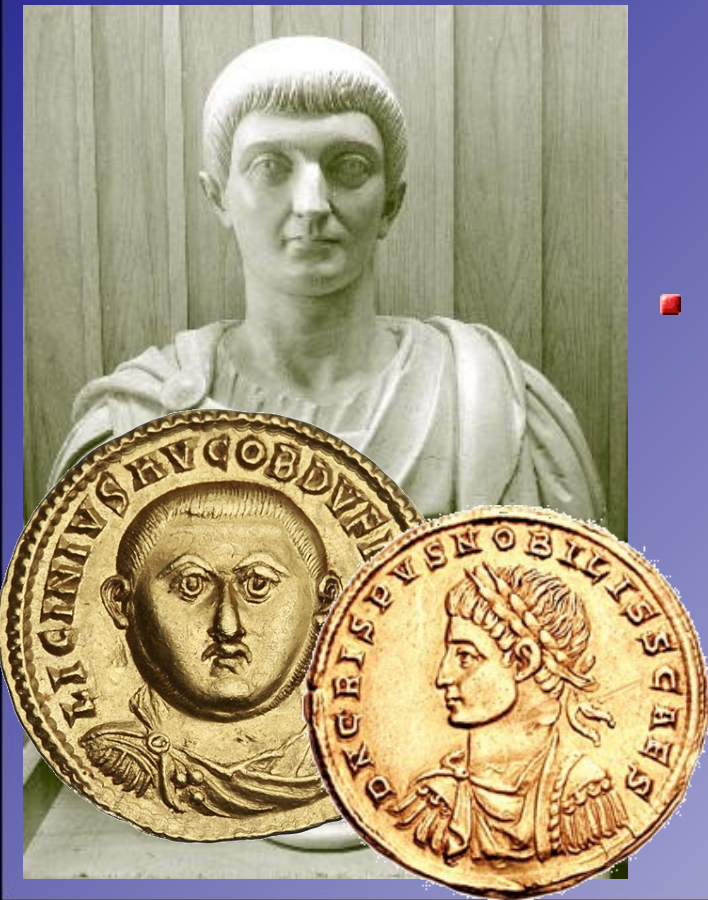
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314-324

Civil war erupted in the Roman Empire

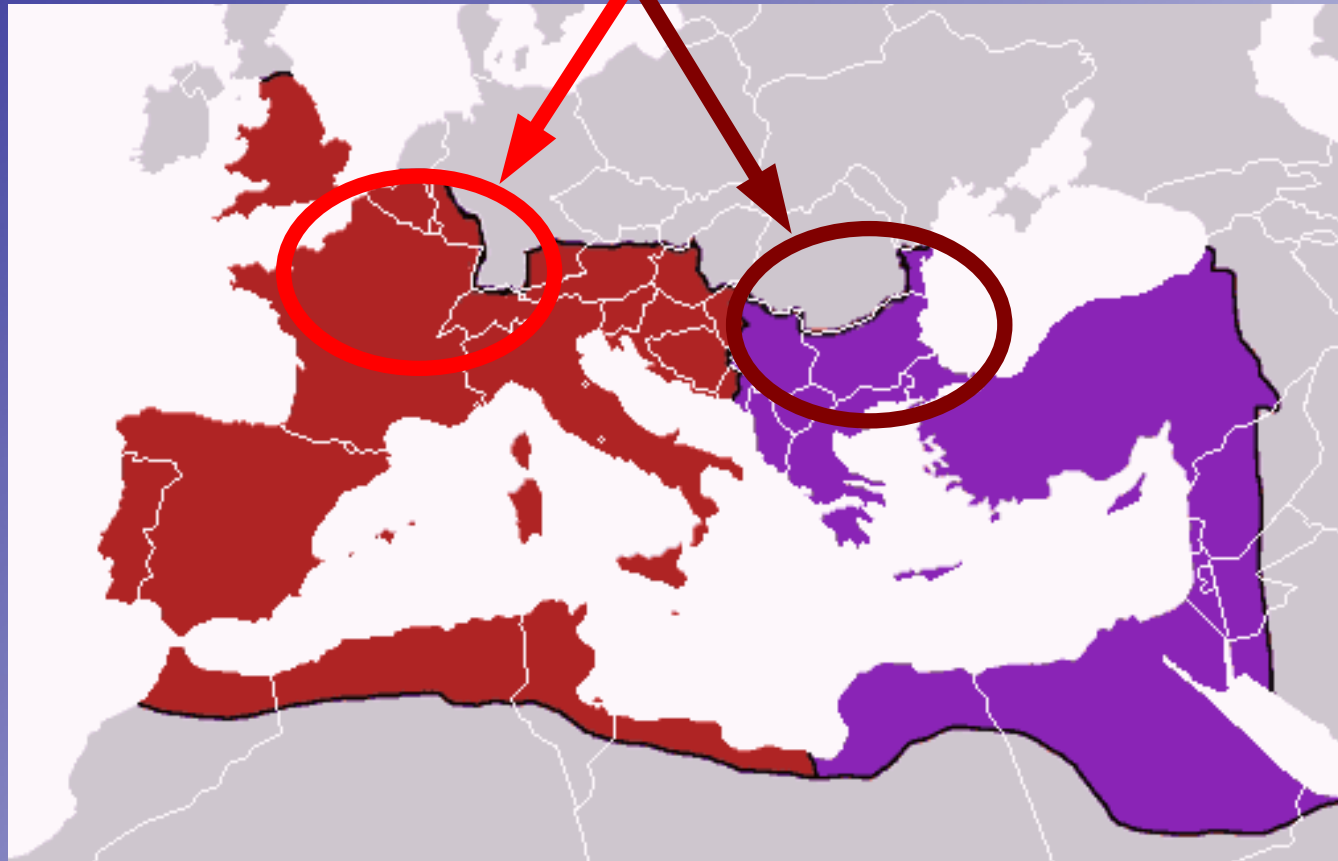
- Constantine's sometime ally / sometime competitor (and current brother-in-law) Licinius, emperor of the Eastern Roman Empire, didn't appreciate playing second to Rome—or Constantine's son, Crispus, being named a *Caesar* in the East
- By 320, Licinius was openly disregarding the Edict of Milan (313), and was again oppressing practising Christians and confiscating their property
- Once raiding tribes from the Eastern Empire were actually allowed to invade Western territories to plunder at will, Constantine finally declared open war against Licinius





# ***The Rise of Christendom***

- Funky little teaching moment—
  - In 324, Licinius and his pagan Germanic/Slavic army of Goths met Constantine and his Christian Germanic army of Franks in a series of battles



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    - Both sides saw this as a specifically *religious* conflict, between the “old” and “new” faiths
      - Licinius prominently displayed images of the classic Roman gods along his battle lines, while Constantine's forces marched under the banner of the *labarum*





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  - In 324, Licinius and his pagan Germanic/Slavic army of Goths met Constantine and his Christian Germanic army of Franks in a series of battles
  - **First, 130,000 troops of Constantine defeated 165,000 troops of Licinius at Adrianopole forcing Licinius to retreat to nearby Byzantium instead of making it back to his Eastern Roman capital of Nicomedia**





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  - **Finally, Constantine defeated the bulk of Licinius' forces at Chrysopolis, leaving 30,000 men dead on the battlefield after a single day of fighting**





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  - **Thanks to the intervention of his wife—Constantine's half-sister—Constantine made a sacred vow to spare his life and allowed him to live as a free citizen in Thessalonica**



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  - **A year later, Constantine had Licinius and his whole family hanged anyway, on charges of suspicion of treason**





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314-324

Civil war erupted in the Roman Empire

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Constantine became emperor of a *united* Roman Empire

- The next year, Constantine's young wife, Fausta—envious of his love for his favored son, Crispus (born to his earlier, beloved wife, Minervina)—devised a trap for the youth to assure that her *own* children would be in line for the throne

- She attempted to seduce Crispus (who was near to her own age), and when he fled in disgust (shades of Joseph and Potiphar's wife), she accused Crispus of raping her





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- Incensed, Constantine had his innocent son executed, and then destroyed his name
  - He removed the name of Crispus from all official documents and monuments, and he never spoke his name again in his life



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- When he later found out what Fausta had done, he had her executed as well
  - She was thrown into an over-heated bath and suffocated





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  - 325 Constantine became emperor of a *united* Roman Empire
  - 330 Constantine dedicated Constantinople
    - To consolidate his rule and emphasize the unity of the Roman Empire, Constantine moved the former capitals of Rome and Nicomedia to Byzantium, and then renamed the city after himself—*Constantinople* (the “City of Constantine”)





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330 Constantine dedicated Constantinople  
337 Constantine died at the age of 65

- His final act was to request to be baptized in the Jordan River, to echo the baptism of Christ Himself—but he was too ill to make the journey
  - He was baptized and died in Achyron, a suburb of Nicomedia, on the day of Pentecost in 337
    - It wasn't uncommon for people to wait until their final moments to get baptized, since it was increasingly thought that baptism forgives all sins—and you want as few left on your head as possible when you die





# ***The Rise of Christendom***

- Funky little teaching moment—
  - As you many have noticed, the person being baptized here is, in fact, naked
    - The vast majority of early art showing baptisms shows the people entirely naked
    - Hippolytus described a baptismal service in 215—
      - At the hour in which the cock crows, they shall first pray over the water. When they come to the water, the water shall be pure and flowing, that is, the water of a spring or a flowing body of water. Then they shall take off all their clothes... No one shall take any foreign object with themselves down into the water. At the time determined for baptism, the bishop shall give thanks over some oil, which he puts in a vessel. It is called the Oil of Thanksgiving. He shall take some more oil and exorcise it. It is called the Oil of Exorcism. A deacon shall hold the Oil of Exorcism and stand on the left. Another deacon shall hold the Oil of Thanksgiving and stand on the right. When the elder takes hold of each of them who are to receive baptism, he shall tell each of them to renounce, saying, "I renounce you Satan, all your service, and all your works." After he has said this, he shall anoint each with the Oil of Exorcism, saying, "Let every evil spirit depart from you." Then, after these things, the bishop passes each of them on to the elder who stands at the water. They shall stand in the water naked. A deacon, likewise, will go down with them into the water.





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    - Hippolytus described a baptismal service in 215—
      - When each of them to be baptized has gone down into the water, the one baptizing shall lay hands on each of them, asking, "Do you believe in God the Father Almighty?" And the one being baptized shall answer, "I believe." He shall then baptize each of them once, laying his hand upon each of their heads. Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was born of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, who was crucified under Pontius Pilate, and died, and rose on the third day living from the dead, and ascended into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of the Father, the one coming to judge the living and the dead?" When each has answered, "I believe," he shall baptize a second time. Then he shall ask, "Do you believe in the Holy Spirit and the Holy Church and the resurrection of the flesh?" Then each being baptized shall answer, "I believe." And thus let him baptize the third time. Afterward, when they have come up out of the water, they shall be anointed by the elder with the Oil of Thanksgiving, saying, "I anoint you with holy oil in the name of Jesus Christ." Then, drying themselves, they shall dress and afterwards gather in the church.



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    - Hippolytus described a baptismal service in 215
    - If this was the norm back in the early Church, why was changed? What was lost in changing it?  
(Note: I am not suggesting in any way that we should return to doing it that way)





# ***The Rise of Christendom***



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- Constantine left his three surviving sons (Constantine II, Constantius II, and Constans) an empire that stretched across the known world at the time, but his most *enduring* legacy was felt in the Church itself—of which, he called himself the “Thirteenth Apostle”

