

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 Rise of Christendom

- The establishment of Christendom

360

Julian the Apostate became Emperor

- Julian—though trained as a theologian under Eusebius—had renounced his Christian faith in 350 to become a worshipper of Helios, the sun god
 - As a former Christian, he knew better than to attack or persecute the Church directly—that tended to strengthen it rather than hurt it
 - So he harassed and marginalized the Church instead
 - He legalized all religions, and used that as a pretext for ceasing all financial aid to Christian churches
 - He returned temples taken from pagans and given to churches
 - He removed Christians from their government seats
 - He gave economic incentives for Christians to recant and rejoin their pagan religions



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 - So he harassed and marginalized the Church instead
 - He required all schoolteachers to be approved by the government
 - Then he allowed no Christians to teach (arguing that they were “uneducated in the classics”)
 - “If they want to learn literature, they have Luke and Mark: Let them go back to their churches and expound on them...”



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 - He required all schoolteachers to be approved by the government
 - He wrote several books and sermons belittling Christians publicly
 - He ridiculed Christ, saying, “Jesus has now been celebrated about 300 years having done nothing in his lifetime worthy of fame, unless anyone thinks it is a very great work to heal lame and blind people and exorcise demoniacs...”



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 - He ridiculed the Eden story
 - He called Christians cultists and apostates from Judaism



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 - He required all schoolteachers to be approved by the government
 - He wrote several books and sermons belittling Christians publicly
 - He even tried to rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem so that he could further the schism between the Church and Judaism
 - But an earthquake and a fire thwarted this efforts



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- Even with all of that, he was frustrated that he had to admit that Christianity did a better job of being “good” than his *pagan* priests did
 - “These... Galileans not only feed their own poor, but ours also; welcoming them into their *agape* feasts, they attract them, as children are attracted, with cakes. Whilst the pagan priests neglect the poor, the hated Galileans devote themselves to works of charity, and by a display of false compassion have established and given effect to their pernicious errors. See their love-feasts, and their tables spread for the indigent. Such practice is common among them, and causes a contempt for our gods.” (in *Against the Galileans*, 361)
 - How important is our *witness* to others?



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Julian the Apostate became Emperor

Julian the Apostate died in Persia

- He left Constantinople to invade Persia and depose Shapur II, but then died from complications stemming from a wound he suffered at the Battle of Samarra
- Tradition says that his final words were, “*νενίκηκάς με, Γαλιλαῖε!*” (in Latin, “*Vicisti, Galilaeae!*”—in English, “You have beaten me, Galilean!”)
- Ironically, this led to speculation that he had perhaps been assassinated by some Galilean (but contemporary historians discounted them)



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- **His death left a power vacuum, and led to a succession of emperors, including first Julian's general in Persia, Jovian and then Valentinian—a Christian who had been a tribune under Julian in Gaul**
 - He named his brother, Valens (an *Arian Christian*), emperor in the East



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In the Church, the Council of Laodicea met

- They discussed several issues, but the primary ones were these:

- 1) They discussed the canon (and decided that they didn't like the Book of Revelation)
- 2) They officially condemned any form of astrology
- 3) They officially condemned any Christian who honored the *Sabbath* (Saturday) and required the honoring of the *Lord's Day* (Sunday)

- To keep the Fourth Commandment was considered tantamount to Judaizing, and was punishable by excommunication
- Augustine argued that we really have only *Nine* Commandments



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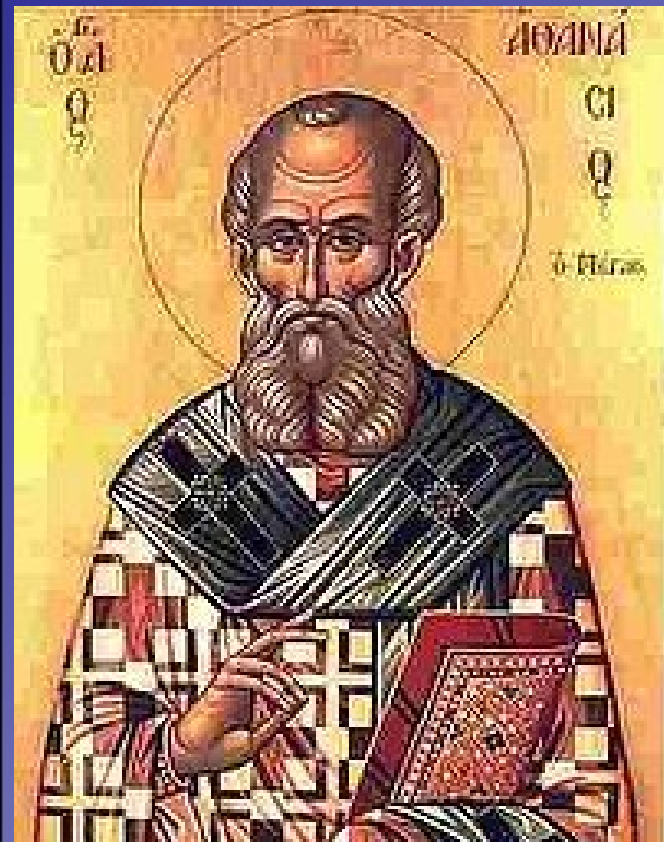
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Athanasius wrote an Easter letter

- That's not a big deal, in and of itself, but in the letter, he listed the 27 books of the New Testament, in order, and was the first to use the word “κανών” (“canon,” or “ruler” or “measuring stick”) to describe them as the basis for comparison for all doctrine and action



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- 376 The Visigoths settled in Roman territory
- Barbarian tribes were pressed to move to the west and south by the encroaching Huns



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 - Barbarian tribes were pressed to move
 - **Valentinian decisively beat them back**
in battle after battle in the West



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- In fact, after squelching a Pictish revolt in Britain, he renamed the island, "Valentia," in his own honor



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 - **The Alemanni, Quadi, and Sarmatians invaded Pannonia, and Valentinian was so angry that he had a stroke and died**
 - As his heirs, he left his sons Gratian and Valentinian II as co-emperors in the West—both of which were weak leaders, to say the least, and spent much of their time moving their capitals around to escape various invading barbarians and usurping generals



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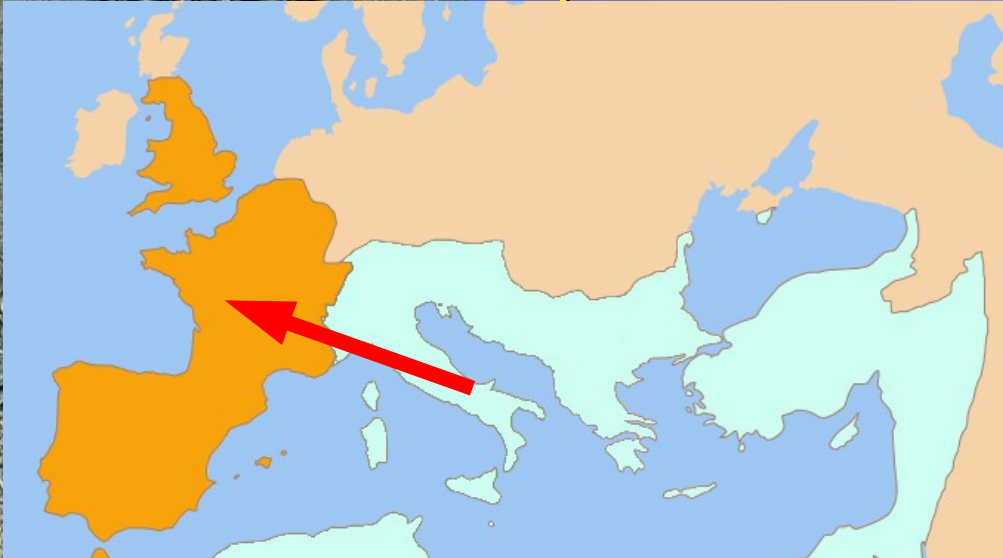
- Barbarian tribes were pressed to move
- **In the East, King Fritigern petitioned to allow the Visigoths to settle along the Danube—Valens agreed, hiring them as mercenaries**
 - However, once a famine broke out, Valens withdrew both their food rations and their land, giving them to Roman citizens instead
 - This started a war that lasted six years
 - Valens himself was killed when the Visigoths soundly defeated the Romans at the Battle of Hadrianopolis in 378
 - Both the strength of Rome in the East and the influence of Arianism died along with him



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- 378 **Theodosius became Emperor in the East**
 - **Gratian gave him command of the armies in the East (making him the *de facto* Emperor) so when Valentinian II hanged himself (or was assassinated—take your pick), Gratian pulled all the way back to Gaul and essentially gave Theodosius rule over most of the Roman Empire**



The Rise of Christendom



Constantine

became Emperor
fled in Persia
Council of Laodicea met
wrote Easter letter
in Roman territory
Emperor in the East
command of the armies in the East
(*de facto* Emperor)
problem in defeating
most of the Roman
Empire of barbarians

Though he did win some key battles, most of Theodosius' victories came through politically expedient treaties—such as the one that essentially gave up a large section of the Empire to be controlled by the Gothic barbarians

- As you might expect, this didn't go over very well with the locals



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- After becoming very ill in Thessalonica, Theodosius was baptised by Bishop Acholius, and then got better
 - In response, he signed into law the Edict of Thessalonica, which legally forced all Roman citizens to consider themselves part of the Catholic Church—defined by a strict adherence to the Nicene Creed—under pain of prosecution
 - So is this a *victory* for the Church or a *defeat*?



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382	Theodosius condemned the Manicheans

- **Christian bishops had asked him to strip the Manicheans of their rights under the law—under *previous* laws, they had sometimes been considered a pseudo-Christian sect, protected by the pro-Christian laws**
 - In response, Theodosius ordered the summary execution of all Manicheans, ending their influence in the West forever
 - This is one of the reasons that a young Augustine—at that time, a Manichean—moved to Carthage to study rhetoric



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- **This level of bloodshed was fairly common under Theodosius**

- For instance, in 390, the people of Roman Thessalonica rioted against the garrison of Goths there, killing the garrison commander
 - To show his support for the Goths, Theodosius had every spectator in the crowd killed—slaughtering 7,000 men, women and children, whether they participated in the riot or not
 - Bishop Ambrose forced him to repent of this, which he did—for a full month



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- With the death of Gratian in 383, Theodosius became ruler of the whole Roman Empire—though an increasingly *fragmented* one, technically governed by others
 - Theodosius controlled the center
 - The Goths controlled the East
 - General **Magnus Maximus** (and later, a former grammar teacher named Eugenius) controlled the West
- The Roman Empire was splintering...

