

History of the Church



HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

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The Great Persecution

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Timeline - Persecution Leading Up

Persecution and suffering have been a hallmark of Christianity since its inception. The Bible warns us, "In this world, you will have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world" (John 16:33 NKJV). The rise of Christianity in the Roman Empire was met with intense persecution, as foretold by Jesus Himself. This persecution intensified as the religion gained popularity.

The persecution of Christians began during the reign of Nero, the Roman emperor who ruled from 54 to 68 AD. Nero's persecution was limited to the city of Rome and was sparked by the Great Fire of Rome in 64 AD. He blamed the fire on Christians, using it as an excuse to initiate a brutal persecution of the early Christian community. According to Tacitus, many Christians were arrested, tortured, and executed, and some were even used as human torches to illuminate Nero's garden parties: "Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired." (The Annals, Book XV, Chapter 44, by Cornelius Tacitus)

In the early 200s, persecution of Christians increased significantly. In 202 AD, Emperor Septimius Severus issued an edict against Christians, forbidding them from converting others or meeting for worship. This edict led to the martyrdom of many Christians, including Origen's father, St. Leonides of Alexandria, who was beheaded in 202 AD. As time went on, this persecution began to affect the entire empire. The next emperor to persecute Christians was Decius, who reigned from 249 to 251 AD. During his reign, many Christians were martyred, including St. Philopateer, "Abu-Seifen," Mercerus, and St. Cyprian, who was forced into hiding. Origen was also put in prison during this time.

The persecution of Christians reached its peak during the reign of Valerian, who ruled from 253 to 260 AD. Valerian was a determined and ruthless persecutor of Christians. He issued several edicts against them, ordering their arrest, imprisonment, torture, and execution. Many Christians were martyred during Valerian's reign, including St. Cyprian, the bishop of Carthage, who was beheaded in 258 AD. Valerian himself was then captured by the Persians and never seen again. His son, Gallienus,

who became emperor in 260 AD, formally declared that Christians could worship freely, own property, and hold political office. He did so because he felt that his father's fate was a result of God's judgment.

The Calm Before the Storm

During the reign of Gallienus, the Roman Empire experienced a significant transformation. Christianity gradually gained prominence, as evidenced by the construction of numerous church buildings, cathedrals, and basilicas. Christians began to rise through the ranks of the military and government, playing increasingly influential roles.

However, the empire faced significant political instability during this period. A rapid succession of emperors marked this era, with as many as twenty-five different emperors ruling and dying within just a span of fifty years. Many of these emperors met their end through violent means, often assassinated by their own soldiers.

The vastness of the empire also posed challenges. The Persian Empire and various barbarian tribes from the outskirts slowly encroached upon Roman territory, leading to territorial losses and a decline in the economy. As the empire expanded, governing and defending its far-flung provinces became increasingly difficult.

The combination of political turmoil, military threats, and economic decline contributed to a period known as the Crisis of the Third Century. This crisis deeply affected the Roman Empire and paved the way for significant changes, including the eventual rise of Christianity and the division of the empire into eastern and western halves.

Growth of the Church

Despite the turmoil and instability that plagued the Roman Empire during the latter half of the 3rd century AD, the Christian community within its borders experienced remarkable growth and vitality. In 260 AD, there were approximately 1 million Christians scattered throughout the empire and by 300 AD this number had increased exponentially, reaching an estimated 6 million adherents. This rapid growth represented a significant proportion of the empire's population, accounting for approximately 10-15% of the entire empire.

The expansion of Christianity during this period was not limited to the lower classes or marginalized groups. Many prominent families embraced the Christian faith, and by the end of the 3rd century, there were Christian royals in the palace. Furthermore, the influence of Christianity extended beyond the palace walls and permeated every profession and social strata within the empire.

Christians could be found serving as government officials, merchants, artisans, farmers, and even soldiers.

The flourishing of Christianity during this time is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of the early Christian communities. Despite facing persecution and discrimination, they persevered and spread their message throughout the empire, transforming hearts and minds and laying the foundation for the eventual triumph of Christianity in the centuries to come.

Growing Enemies

Although Christians held many prominent places in the empire, hate for them was still growing among certain groups. Pagan intelligentsia found them ignorant, ridiculous, and appalling. Anybody with financial interests in pagan worship, such as priests, priestesses, augurs, diviners, fortune-tellers, and statue-makers, loathed them. Many in the army and government suspected them to be disloyal, for refusing to participate in Empire celebrations where offerings were given to the idols.

The Rise of Diocletian

The year 284 AD marked a pivotal moment in the history of the Roman Empire. Amidst the turmoil surrounding the economy and public safety, Diocletian emerged as the new emperor, ushering in a period of profound transformation. He implemented the Four Emperor System. At the core of the Four Emperor System was the division of the empire into four distinct regions: east and west, further subdivided into north and south. Each region would be governed by a senior emperor, titled "Augustus," and a junior emperor assistant, titled "Caesar." This arrangement allowed for more efficient administration and quicker decision-making, as each emperor could focus on a smaller portion of the empire.

The Caesars were responsible for reporting to their respective Augusti, who in turn maintained regular communication with each other to formulate common policies. This collaborative approach helped preserve the security and unity of the empire. Furthermore, Diocletian established four capitals near the frontiers of the empire, strategically positioning them to facilitate rapid response to potential attacks. During that time, it was unprecedented that an emperor would share power with anybody else, let alone three other emperors. In addition to the Four Emperor System, he also reformed the tax code, reorganized the army, creating smaller, more mobile units that could respond effectively to threats.

Diocletian's reign marked a period of relative stability and prosperity for the Roman Empire. The Four Emperor System, in particular, proved to be a successful model of governance, providing a framework for effective administration and military defense. Despite its eventual demise, the Four Emperor System left a lasting legacy on the Roman Empire. It paved the way for future imperial structures and influenced the development of political systems throughout history.

Unintended Byproducts

With the empire now divided, cultural and linguistic diversity flourished. In the days before the split, all constituents were united by a shared understanding of Greek and Latin, facilitating open communication throughout the empire. However, as the East and West became distinct entities, the use of Latin in the East and Greek in the West began to decline. This linguistic divide further emphasized the growing cultural differences between the two halves of the empire.

Moreover, the division of the empire resulted in the establishment of four emperors, each with their own unique perspectives and agendas. Diocletian, the driving force behind the division, aspired to preserve the empire's prosperity and ensure the well-being of all citizens, regardless of religious beliefs. He extended tolerance to both Christians and Pagans, seeking to create a harmonious society.

In contrast, Diocletian's Caesar, Galerius, harbored a deep-seated animosity towards Christians. His disdain stemmed from several factors, including his belief that the Christian faith undermined traditional Roman values, his perception of Christians as a threat to the empire's unity, and his personal resentment towards the growing influence of Christianity. Galerius's anti-Christian sentiments would later manifest in the form of widespread persecution, culminating in the Diocletianic Persecution, a dark chapter in the history of early Christianity.

The Seeds of Dissent

Galerius, a fervent believer in the Roman gods, harbored intense animosity towards the Christians within the army and imperial court. He perceived their distinct beliefs and practices as a threat to the traditional Roman values and traditions. Driven by his desire to restore the glory of the Roman Empire, Diocletian sought to appease the gods and ensure their favor, believing that this would bring prosperity and success to the empire. However, the Christians refused to partake in the religious rituals and sacrifices honoring the Roman deities.

The tension between Galerius and the Christians escalated, and eventually, Diocletian yielded to Galerius's persistent demands. Galerius was granted free rein over the army, and he wasted no time

in implementing his plan to eliminate the Christian presence within its ranks. Galerius devised a ruthless ultimatum for the Christian soldiers, forcing them to choose between sacrificing to the Roman gods or resigning from the military. This ultimatum carried grave consequences, as resigning from the army meant forfeiting the generous benefits and privileges they had earned through their service, including their pensions, government-gifted parcels of land, and lifetime incomes.

Despite the severe repercussions, many Christian soldiers chose to resign rather than compromise their faith. They were unwilling to renounce their beliefs and participate in rituals that they considered to be idolatrous. This mass resignation of Christian soldiers left Galerius incensed, but it also revealed the depth of their conviction and the strength of their faith.

The Climax

In 299 AD, Diocletian defeated the Persians in a decisive battle. To commemorate this triumph, he organized an elaborate celebration in the city of Antioch, where he planned to hold sacrifices and perform divinations to honor the Roman gods and seek their blessings. The festivities began with a grand procession of priests, augurs (responsible for reading omens from the gods) and other religious officials, who carried sacred objects and offerings to the temples. They meticulously examined the entrails of sacrificed animals, seeking signs of divine favor or warning. No matter how many times they tried, they could not decipher the entrails, leaving them unable to provide the emperor with the guidance he sought. This was an embarrassing disruption of what was supposed to be a huge celebration.

Diocletian demanded an explanation from the augurs, who told him they noticed Christians from the emperor's own court making the sign of the cross during the ceremony. According to the augurs, this act of Christian devotion had blocked their ability to communicate with the gods. Diocletian was furious and demanded punishment for the Christians in the palace. The first blood was shed, and Galerius, Diocletian's ambitious co-ruler, seized the opportunity to convince the emperor to extend this persecution Empire-wide.

Diocletian, however, was hesitant to plunge the empire into turmoil once again. He had witnessed the devastating effects of previous persecutions and was wary of causing further unrest. Nevertheless, pressured by Galerius and his own desire to assert his authority, he compromised. He sent a delegation to consult the oracle of Apollo at Miletus, seeking divine guidance on how to proceed. The oracle's response, which would shape the fate of countless Christians in the years to come, was yet to be revealed.

Famous Words

In the ancient world, pagan priestesses held a significant role in religious practices. They were revered as intermediaries between the divine and mortal realms, capable of channeling messages from the gods and goddesses. One such priestess, known for her profound connection to the divine, once posed a question to the gods. The response she received was both enigmatic and fateful: "the 'just on earth' have silenced the oracles." The priestess and her fellow pagans were puzzled by this cryptic message. They pondered its meaning, seeking to understand who these "just on earth" were and why they would want to silence the oracles. Some interpreted the message as a warning that a new force was emerging, one that would challenge the traditional pagan beliefs and practices.

Word of the priestess's prophecy spread throughout the Roman Empire, reaching the ears of the emperor, Diocletian. His advisors, eager to maintain the supremacy of the Roman gods, interpreted the message as a reference to the Christians. They believed that the Christians, with their monotheistic faith and rejection of pagan idols, posed a threat to the established religious order. Diocletian, influenced by his advisors, embarked upon one of the most severe persecutions in the history of the church, known as "The Great Persecution." This persecution was particularly intense in Egypt, a region that fell directly under Diocletian's allotted territory. For the Egyptians, this persecution lasted from 299-311 AD, first under Diocletian, then Galerius, and finally Maximianus.

During this time, Christians in Egypt faced unimaginable horrors. They were hunted down, arrested, tortured, and martyred. Their churches were destroyed, and their sacred texts were burned. The persecution was so severe that it threatened to wipe out Christianity in Egypt entirely. Despite the relentless persecution, the Christians in Egypt refused to renounce their faith. They clung to their beliefs with unwavering determination, inspired by the example of their martyred brothers and sisters. Their resilience and steadfastness in the face of adversity would eventually prove to be a turning point in the history of Christianity in Egypt.

The Four Edicts

The Roman Empire's edicts against Christians marked a dramatic shift in their treatment across its vast territories. Governors and mayors were granted the authority to handle Christians as they saw fit, leading to varying levels of persecution. A series of edicts, known as the First, Second, Third, and Fourth Edicts, were issued, each building upon the previous one in terms of severity and marking a progressive escalation in the persecution of Christians.

The edicts against Christians had profound and far-reaching consequences. They resulted in widespread suffering, with countless believers enduring torture, imprisonment, and death. Christian communities were decimated, and their places of worship destroyed.

1st Edict: February 23, 303 AD, all Christian buildings in the empire were to be destroyed. The Christian basilica across from the imperial palace was destroyed. Sacred Scriptures and liturgical vessels were seized and meetings were forbidden. All Christians holding office in the military or government, were either sacrificed to the gods or were imprisoned, persecuted, and killed. Christian freedmen would revert back to essentially being slaves.

2nd Edict: all Christian clergy, regardless of rank, were to be imprisoned. They say there were so many bishops, priests, deacons, subdeacons, lectors, and exorcists in prison, there was no room for common criminals. Due to the influx, Diocletian gave them the option of sacrificing to the idols, or being tortured and killed. This edict was ignored by the Caesar of the West, Constantius, who ruled over Gaul and Britain. All the other emperors acted on these edicts with vehemence. However, there were so many to be dealt with, sometimes they were given certificates anyway just to lessen the load on the prisons and executioners. These certificates falsely attested that the clergy had complied with the edict, allowing them to escape punishment.

3rd Edict: Diocletian, in an attempt to quell the growing Christian population within the Roman Empire, issued the Third Edict. This edict offered pardon to any Christian who renounced their faith and performed sacrifices to the Roman gods. However, very few Christians took up this offer, as most remained steadfast in their beliefs.

4th Edict: Seeing that the Third Edict had failed to achieve its desired effect, Diocletian issued the Fourth Edict, which was far more severe. This edict demanded that all inhabitants of the Roman Empire, regardless of their religious beliefs, were to offer sacrifices to the Roman gods or face severe consequences. Those who refused would be subjected to torture and, ultimately, death. This edict marked the beginning of a systematic persecution of Christians throughout the Roman Empire, resulting in the deaths of countless believers.

The edict issued by the Roman Empire marked a turning point in the treatment of Christians throughout its vast territories. Governors and mayors were granted the authority to deal with Christians as they deemed fit, resulting in varying degrees of persecution across the empire. The eastern regions experienced the most severe oppression. We hear of many stories of famous martyrs who were once soldiers in the Roman Empire. Their proximity to the emperors and the widespread circulation of their stories ensured that their martyrdom resonated across the empire. St. George, St.

Mina, St. Theodore are just a few examples of these courageous soldiers. So many people became Christians as they witnessed others giving up their lives, that it enraged the emperors, who, in turn, intensified their persecutions. This is the reason we call the blood of the martyrs the “Seed of Faith,” as their sacrifices contributed to the growth and strengthening of the Christian church. Unfortunately, entire cities such as Akhmim in Egypt and Phrygia in modern-day Turkey were martyred.

The Fall of Diocletian

In 304 AD, the Roman Emperor Diocletian's reign was marked by a severe persecution of Christians. His hatred for them was so intense that he vowed to continue the persecutions until the blood of the martyrs reached his horse's knees. The persecution began in 303 AD and was particularly brutal during the first two years. It is estimated that nearly one million Coptic Christians alone were martyred in 303 and 304 AD. Christians were subjected to various forms of torture and execution, including beheading, crucifixion, and burning at the stake.

According to tradition, Diocletian's downfall was brought about by divine intervention. While riding his horse on a campaign against the Christians, he was suddenly struck with illness. Both he and the horse fell to the ground, and as they did, the horse's knees touched a pool of blood from recently martyred Christians. This fulfilled Diocletian's wish, but it also marked the beginning of his downfall. The illness caused Diocletian to lose his sight and sanity. He became increasingly paranoid and cruel, and his rule became even more oppressive. In 304 AD, he was forced to retire due to his deteriorating health. He died a year later in 305 AD, leaving behind a legacy of tyranny and persecution.

The story of Diocletian's downfall serves as a powerful reminder of the consequences of religious intolerance and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. His persecution of Christians failed to extinguish the faith, and the Church continued to grow and flourish in spite of his efforts. Diocletian's reign ended in disgrace, and his name became synonymous with cruelty and oppression.

The Rise of Christianity

The rise of King Constantine to power stands as a pivotal moment that forever altered the course of Christianity. The year 306 AD marked a turning point as Constantine ascended to the throne of the Western Roman Empire upon the death of his father, Constantius. Notably, Constantine's Christian half-sister, Anastasia, played a crucial role in his tolerant stance toward Christians. Through his declarations, Constantine granted religious freedom throughout his territories, setting a precedent that would have lasting implications.

Meanwhile, in the Eastern Roman Empire, Maxentius ruled as co-emperor. Recognizing the popularity of Christianity in the west, Maxentius sought to maintain his power by imitating Constantine's policy of religious tolerance. However, ambition consumed Maxentius, and he harbored dreams of expanding his empire by declaring war on Constantine. The stage was set for a clash of titans, with Maxentius boasting a formidable army of 100,000 troops, while Constantine commanded a comparatively smaller force of 40,000.

On the eve of the decisive battle, Constantine had a profound dream. In the depths of slumber, he received divine instruction to adopt the sign of the Cross (represented by the Greek symbols P and X) as his battle standard. The angel of the Lord appeared to him in a vision, uttering the prophetic words: "Make a sign for yourself like that sign which you had seen, and with it you shall conquer your enemies." In contrast, Maxentius, misled by his reliance on pagan idols, received erroneous advice that led him and his army to a false sense of security. Constantine, emboldened by the divine revelation, launched a surprise attack while Maxentius and his forces slumbered. The result was a resounding victory for Constantine, who emerged as the undisputed ruler of half the Roman Empire.

Constantine's triumph over Maxentius marked a watershed moment for Christianity. His embrace of the faith, coupled with his military prowess, paved the way for the eventual legalization of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire under the Edict of Milan in 313 AD. Constantine's conversion had a profound impact on the development of Christianity, transforming it from a persecuted sect to a recognized and influential religion.

The Edict of Milan, issued jointly by Constantine and Licinius, was a landmark document that granted freedom of religion to all citizens of the Roman Empire, including Christians. The edict declared that Christians should be allowed to practice their faith without fear of persecution, and it also restored property that had been confiscated from Christians during previous persecutions. The Edict of Milan was a major turning point in the history of Christianity, and it marked the beginning of a new era of tolerance and understanding between Christians and pagans.

The edict was issued at a time when Christianity was still a relatively small religion, but it was rapidly growing in popularity. Constantine's conversion and the Edict of Milan helped to accelerate the growth of Christianity, and within a few centuries, it would become the dominant religion in the Roman Empire.

Founded on the blood of the martyrs

In recognition of the profound impact of persecution of Christians throughout history, the church created a unique calendar that stands as a testament to its enduring faith and resilience. The Coptic calendar's starting point is deliberately set to the year 284 AD, coinciding with the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian. "But most wonderful of all is the fact that we who have consecrated ourselves to Him, honor Him not only with our voices and with the sound of words, but also with complete elevation of soul, so that we choose to give testimony unto Him rather than to preserve our own lives." (Eusebius of Caesarea)



Review Questions

1. Christians lived peacefully in the Roman Empire under Diocletian.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
2. Galerius spent his whole life persecuting Christians.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
3. Galerius and Diocletian both fell sick.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
4. How many edicts were there?
 - a. 1
 - b. 2
 - c. 3
 - d. 4**
5. Which Caesar was more lenient on Christians?
 - a. Diocletian
 - b. Constantius**
 - c. Galerius
 - d. Nero Caesar
6. Who was the first to persecute Christians in Rome?
 - a. Nero**
 - b. Diocletian
 - c. Claudius
 - d. Domitian
7. What year does the new Coptic calendar start?
 - a. 284 AD**
 - b. 285 AD
 - c. 286 AD
 - d. 287 AD
8. What led to Diocletian's hatred of Christians?

- a. Their refusal to worship the Roman gods
 - b. Their support of his political rivals
 - c. They were making the sign of the cross and blocked divinations to their gods**
 - d. Their refusal to pay taxes
9. What was Constantine's dream about?
- a. Meeting Christ
 - b. Talking to an angel
 - c. Taking the sign of the cross to battle**
 - d. All of the above
10. What did the oracle of Apollo say?
- a. "Know thyself."
 - b. "Nothing in excess."
 - c. "The unexamined life is not worth living."
 - d. "The 'just on earth' have silenced the oracles."**



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Monasticism

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Before Monasticism

Historians have meticulously accounted for ten waves of extensive persecutions that occurred during the reign of various Roman emperors. These emperors, including prominent figures such as Nero, Domitian, Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, Severus, Maximus, Decius, Valerian, Aurelian, and Diocletian, played a significant role in the persecution of early Christians. The martyrdom of Saint Peter, which transpired in 311 AD during Diocletian's rule, marked the final act of this persecution.

To this day, the Coptic Orthodox Church maintains a unique calendar that commemorates the martyrs who perished during this challenging period, commencing with the reign of Diocletian in 284 AD. This calendar serves as a testament to the enduring legacy of the Coptic martyrs, who made immeasurable sacrifices for their faith.

In 220 AD, the renowned theologian Tertullian made a profound observation. He stated that “if the martyrs throughout the world were to be put on one side of the scale and the Coptic martyrs alone on the other side of the scale, the latter would outweigh the former.” This remarkable statement underscores the astounding number of Coptic Christians who willingly gave their lives for their faith during the period of persecution.

The Church of the Martyrs stands as a solemn testament to the myriads of martyrs, encompassing men, women, and children from all walks of life. These courageous individuals willingly sacrificed their lives, unwavering in their commitment to their faith. Their stories serve as a powerful reminder of the strength and resilience of the human spirit, even in the face of adversity and persecution.

In the year 312 AD, a significant event unfolded that marked a turning point in the history of Christianity. King Constantine, a Roman emperor, issued an edict legalizing Christianity, thus putting an end to the relentless persecution of Christians that had persisted for centuries. While the legalization of Christianity was undoubtedly a momentous occasion for many, it also brought about an unexpected reaction among certain devout Christians. For those who had long yearned to shed their

blood as martyrs, witnessing for Christ and enduring persecution had been a cherished aspiration. However, with the sudden cessation of active persecution, these individuals felt a sense of loss and disappointment.

It was during this period of transition that monasticism, an emerging spiritual movement, captured the attention of the Church. Monasticism provided a unique path for Christians seeking a life of perfection and purity of heart. Monasteries, often situated in remote and solitary locations, offered an environment conducive to deep contemplation, prayer, and self-denial. For those who desired martyrdom, monasticism presented a new means to sacrifice themselves for the love they had for Christ. Instead of seeking physical death through persecution, they embraced a life of spiritual death, renouncing worldly possessions, desires, and ambitions. Through rigorous asceticism, prayer, and meditation, they sought to mortify their flesh and bring their spirits into union with God.

Thus began the era of the “white martyrdom”. This form of spiritual martyrdom, often referred to as the “white martyrdom,” became a popular choice for Christians who yearned to offer their lives to God in a profound and transformative way. Monasticism allowed them to embrace a life of sacrifice and devotion, channeling their energies into practices that purified their hearts and minds, ultimately bringing them closer to the divine presence. The era of “white martyrdom” marked a significant chapter in the history of Christianity, as countless individuals found solace and purpose in monastic life. They embraced a path of self-denial and spiritual growth, seeking to attain a state of purity and perfection through their unwavering commitment to God. Their lives served as a testament to the enduring power of faith and the human spirit's capacity for sacrifice and devotion.

White Martyrdom

Abba Daniel of Scetis says, “The soul prospers in the measure in which the body is weakened.” One of the most striking aspects of the desert fathers’ asceticism was their detachment from material possessions, particularly money. They grasped that the love of money had the power to enslave the soul, binding it to the pursuit of wealth and possessions. By willingly relinquishing their attachment to money, they severed the chains that held them captive. This renunciation was not merely a symbolic gesture but a profound transformation that reshaped their inner landscape.

Imagine a finger that is tied up and rendered immobile for an extended period. Over time, the finger atrophies, losing its strength and flexibility. In the same way, the desert fathers understood that by detaching themselves from the desire for money, they were allowing that desire to wither and die. They sought something deeper and more enduring—a freedom that transcended the limitations of the material world.

Through their unwavering commitment to asceticism, the desert fathers experienced a profound transformation. They discovered that by denying themselves bodily pleasures, they were not depriving themselves of joy but rather cultivating a deeper and more authentic form of happiness. They understood that true freedom lay not in the accumulation of wealth or the indulgence in sensual pleasures but in the liberation of the soul from worldly attachments.

Their example serves as a testament to the power of asceticism as a means of spiritual growth and personal transformation. By embracing a life of simplicity and self-denial, they unlocked the potential for true freedom and inner peace. Their legacy continues to inspire individuals seeking a deeper connection with the divine and a life lived with purpose and meaning. In Colossians 3:2-3 it states, "Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God."

The Monastic Life - An Internal Rule

Monastic Life: A Deeper Dive into its Principles and Practices

Monastic life, a centuries-old tradition, is centered around a unique "internal rule." This rule emphasizes that true discipline and spiritual growth stem from within an individual. The focus is on aligning one's life with the teachings of Christ, fostering an environment where faith becomes an active, lived experience rather than a mere set of beliefs.

The Internal Rule: A Contrast to External Regulations

The internal rule stands in contrast to the external rules and expectations that often govern our lives. In the monastic context, the emphasis is on cultivating a deep, personal relationship with God. This internal focus requires individuals to constantly evaluate their thoughts, actions, and motivations to ensure they are in harmony with their spiritual goals.

Faith as Work: A Life of Devotion

For a monk, faith isn't just a belief system; it's a way of life. Every aspect of their daily routine, from prayer and meditation to manual labor and service, is infused with a sense of devotion. This integration of faith and action creates a holistic approach to spiritual growth.

The Pursuit of Divine Love

A modern monk's reflection beautifully captures the essence of monastic life: "When you give yourself to God, the desire for other things falls away." This sentiment highlights the transformative

power of monastic devotion. As individuals deepen their connection with the divine, their attachment to worldly possessions and desires diminishes, replaced by a yearning for a deeper relationship with the Creator.

Challenges and Community Support

The monastic path is not without its challenges. Monks often grapple with internal struggles, such as temptations, doubts, and distractions. Additionally, they must navigate the complexities of maintaining some connection to the world while remaining committed to their spiritual pursuits. Seeking guidance from experienced spiritual mentors and fostering a supportive community are crucial for navigating these challenges.

The Three Pillars: Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience

Monastic life is traditionally built upon the three vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience. These vows represent a commitment to a life of simplicity, self-discipline, and surrender to God's will.

- **Poverty:** Monks renounce material possessions and embrace a life of simplicity, recognizing that true wealth lies in spiritual riches.
- **Chastity:** Monks abstain from sexual activity, focusing their energies on spiritual growth and service to others.
- **Obedience:** Monks practice obedience to their spiritual superiors and the rules of their monastic community, cultivating humility and a willingness to submit to a higher authority.

A Life of Purpose and Devotion

Monastic life, with its emphasis on internal discipline, faith-based action, and the pursuit of divine love, offers a unique path to spiritual fulfillment. While challenging, the monastic journey provides individuals with the opportunity to deepen their relationship with God, cultivate inner peace, and contribute to the betterment of the world through service and prayer.

Monastic Vows - Poverty

Deepening The Understanding of Poverty in Monasticism: Insights from St. Clement

St. Clement's profound teachings on poverty resonate deeply within the monastic tradition. He elucidates how embracing poverty is not merely an act of material renunciation but a transformative spiritual path that leads to inner freedom and alignment with divine will.

“That many of us are called poor, this is not our disgrace, but our glory. For, as our mind is relaxed by luxury, so is it strengthened by frugality? Yet, who can be poor if

he does not want - if he does not crave for - the possessions of others? Who can be poor if he is rich towards God? He, rather, is poor, who, although he has much, desires more...wealth, when not properly governed, is a stronghold of evil. Many, because of casting their eyes upon it, will never reach the Kingdom of Heaven. For they are sick for the things of the world, and are living proudly through luxury...Love of money is found to be the stronghold of evil, which the apostle says, 'is the root of all evils.' But the best riches is poverty of desires. And the true magnanimity is not to be proud of wealth, but to despise it."

Poverty as a Catalyst for Spiritual Growth

- **Easing the Burden of Material Concerns:** St. Clement observes that poverty liberates the monk from the anxieties and distractions that accompany the pursuit and maintenance of worldly possessions. By detaching from material attachments, the monk's mind becomes more receptive to spiritual pursuits.
- **Focusing the Mind and Heart:** Poverty fosters a focused and intentional life. When the monk is not preoccupied with material concerns, their attention naturally gravitates towards the contemplation of God and the pursuit of salvation.
- **Cultivating Unity of Faith:** Poverty helps to dismantle the ego's barriers and opens the monk to a deeper experience of faith. This experience transcends intellectual understanding and leads to a profound union with the divine.
- **Unveiling God's Glory:** Through the lens of poverty, the monk glimpses the ineffable glory of God. This experience is not about material abundance but about recognizing the infinite riches of God's presence.

Poverty as a Means of Overcoming Temptation

- **Severing the Roots of Struggle:** St. Clement emphasizes that poverty strikes at the very heart of temptation. By voluntarily embracing a life of simplicity, the monk weakens the allure of worldly desires and reduces their power to ensnare the soul.
- **The True Nature of Poverty:** St. Clement challenges the conventional understanding of poverty. He argues that true poverty is not about lacking material possessions but about being free from the craving for them.
- **Poverty as a Spiritual Treasure:** In contrast to the "stronghold of evil" that wealth can become, St. Clement presents poverty as a form of spiritual wealth. It is a treasure that enriches the soul and draws it closer to God.

The Dangers of Wealth and Materialism

- **The Illusion of Wealth:** St. Clement warns against the deceptive nature of wealth. It promises happiness and security but often leads to spiritual emptiness and alienation from God.
- **The Obstacle to Salvation:** The pursuit of wealth can become an insurmountable obstacle on the path to salvation. Those who are captivated by material possessions may never attain the Kingdom of Heaven.
- **The Love of Money as the Root of Evil:** Echoing the words of the Apostle Paul, St. Clement identifies the love of money as the source of all kinds of evil. This love breeds greed, envy, and

a host of other vices that corrupt the soul.

Embracing True Magnanimity

- **Despising Wealth, Not Flaunting It:** St. Clement contrasts true magnanimity with the pride associated with material wealth. True magnanimity lies in recognizing the fleeting nature of worldly possessions and placing one's trust in God alone.
- **Poverty of Desires as the Greatest Riches:** In a paradoxical turn, St. Clement declares that the greatest riches are found in poverty of desires. This is the state of inner freedom and contentment that comes from detachment from material things.

St. Clement's teachings on poverty offer a profound challenge and invitation to all who seek spiritual growth. They remind us that true wealth lies not in material possessions but in the riches of the soul. By embracing poverty, we can overcome the tyranny of worldly desires, cultivate inner freedom, and open ourselves to the transformative power of God's grace.

Monastic Vows - Chastity

Chastity and virginity held a profound symbolism in the early Church, representing unwavering faithfulness to God. This emphasis, however, was only evident in a small portion of the Old Testament in Israel, where procreation and the expansion of the Israelite people were paramount. The concept of celibacy as a pathway to spiritual elevation gained prominence in the early Christian era.

St. Cyprian, an early Church Father, elucidated this shift in perspective. He acknowledged that during the earlier epochs of human history, when the world was still "rough and void," procreation was essential for the growth and flourishing of humanity. However, as the world became populated and settled, a new spiritual paradigm emerged. Cyprian posited that those who could embrace celibacy were, in a sense, becoming "eunuchs unto the Kingdom." This concept did not imply a literal physical emasculation but rather a voluntary renunciation of worldly pleasures for the sake of spiritual advancement.

“While the world was still rough and void, we were propagated by the fruitful begetting of numbers. We increased, to the enlargement of the human race. However, now that the world is filled and the earth is cultivated, those who can receive celibacy - living after the manner of eunuchs - are made eunuchs unto the Kingdom. The Lord does not command this, but He exhorts this... When He says that in His Father's house there are many mansions, He indicates there are dwellings of better habitation. You (virgins) are seeking those better habitations.” - St. Cyprian

While St. Cyprian acknowledged that celibacy was not a divine commandment, he extolled its virtues as a pathway to a higher spiritual plane. He referenced the Lord's teaching about the "many

mansions" in His Father's house, suggesting that those who embraced celibacy were seeking a more exalted dwelling place in the afterlife.

St. Methodius, another influential early Church Father, offered a similarly lofty view of virginity. He described it as a "supernaturally great, wonderful, and glorious" state of being. Methodius connected virginity directly to the concept of immortality, asserting that it was the "root, flower, and first fruits" of eternal life. This connection was grounded in his interpretation of the Lord's promise that those who made themselves "eunuchs" for the Kingdom of Heaven would inherit eternal life.

“virginity is something supernaturally great, wonderful, and glorious. To speak plainly and in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, this best and noblest manner of life is alone the root of immortality—as well as its flower and first fruits. And for this reason, the Lord promises that those who have made themselves eunuchs shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven...Celibacy among humans is a very rare thing and difficult to attain...For we must think of virginity as walking upon the earth—yet also reaching up to Heaven.” - St. Methodius

Both Sts. Cyprian and Methodius recognized that celibacy was a challenging path, requiring significant discipline and self-denial. St. Methodius described it as a "rare thing and difficult to attain." However, they both emphasized its transformative potential, suggesting that it enabled celibate individuals to transcend earthly concerns and draw closer to God.

Monastic Vows - Obedience

St. Irenaeus, a prominent theologian of the early Church, emphasized the profound significance of obedience in the Christian life. “...we will give an account to God not only of deeds but even of words and thoughts. For under liberty, a man is more severely tested as to whether he will reverence, fear, and love the Lord...God desires obedience, which renders His worshippers secure—rather than sacrifices and burnt offerings, which avail men nothing towards righteousness.” His assertion that we are accountable to God not only for our actions but also for our words and thoughts underscores the all-encompassing nature of our relationship with the Divine. This concept is particularly relevant in an era where casual speech and fleeting thoughts often go unchecked. St. Irenaeus reminds us that true liberty lies not in unrestrained expression but in the conscious alignment of our thoughts, words, and deeds with the will of God.

Furthermore, St. Irenaeus highlights the superiority of obedience over mere ritualistic observance. Sacrifices and burnt offerings, while part of the Old Testament tradition, are ultimately meaningless if they are not accompanied by a heart that is truly surrendered to God. Obedience, in contrast, is a dynamic and ongoing expression of our love and reverence for the Lord. It is through

obedience that we cultivate a deep and abiding relationship with God, one that is characterized by trust, humility, and a willingness to submit our own desires to His perfect will.

St. Ephraim's Portrayal of Monastic Life

St. Ephraim offers a vivid and realistic portrayal of monasticism. He challenges the romanticized notion of monastic life as a path of ease and tranquility. Instead, he presents it as a journey of intense struggle and self-denial. The saints, he reminds us, did not attain their crowns of glory without enduring immense hardships. They faced torture, mockery, imprisonment, and even martyrdom. Their lives were marked by constant self-discipline, unwavering faith, and a deep longing for the eternal rewards that awaited them in heaven.

"we do well to admire the blessedness of the saints and desire to be crowned as they are, but we are unwilling to imitate their labors and combats. Do you think that they were crowned without labors and afflictions in the same manner as you desire to be? Will you hear what kind of rest the saints had in this life? Some of them were tortured, others had trials of cruel mockings and scourgings, yes, even more of bonds and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword, they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted and tormented. The world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. Lo, you have heard a few particulars out of many. Such were the accommodations and repose of the saints in this life; and they bore these things with all joy because they looked for those eternal good things which are laid up for them in the heavens, which eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither have they entered into to heart of man."

St. Ephraim's words serve as a powerful reminder that the pursuit of holiness requires sacrifice and perseverance. The monastic path, while not for everyone, offers a unique opportunity for individuals to dedicate their lives entirely to God. It is a call to radical discipleship, a life of prayer, contemplation, and service. While the challenges are great, the rewards are even greater – a life of profound intimacy with God and the promise of eternal life in His presence.

The teachings of St. Irenaeus and St. Ephraim offer profound insights into the nature of obedience and the monastic life. They challenge us to examine our own lives and consider the ways in which we can deepen our commitment to God. Whether we are called to the monastic life or to a life of service in the world, we are all called to live lives of obedience, sacrifice, and unwavering faith. It is through these virtues that we can attain true freedom, experience the fullness of God's love, and ultimately achieve the eternal destiny that He has prepared for us.



Review Questions

11. What is the internal rule? (A: It's the idea that discipline comes from within and that one must prevent anything that inhibits one from coming close to God.)
12. Monastic life encircles around three principles. What are they? (A: Poverty, chastity, and obedience.)
13. King _____ legalized Christianity. (A: Constantine)
14. Copts now follow the calendar of the _____. (A: Martyrs)
15. The calendar began in the reign of _____. (A: Diocletian)



Books & References

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Council of Nicaea & Canons

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Commemoration of the Saints

Throughout the commemoration of the saints, believers are reminded of the extraordinary individuals whose lives and sacrifices have indelibly shaped the Christian faith. Among those honored are Saint Gregory the Theologian, renowned for his eloquence and theological insights, and Saint Cyril the Pillar of the Faith, known for his steadfast defense of orthodoxy. Saint Demetrious and Saint Severus stand as unwavering champions of the faith, while Saint Athanasius's unwavering commitment to upholding the truth against heresy earned him the title "Father of Orthodoxy."

Who are all these individuals mentioned in the commemoration of the saints and why commemorate? What thoughts are invoked during the prayer?

The names of these saints should evoke a sense of awe, inspiration and gratitude reminding believers of the rich heritage and unwavering commitment that have characterized the Christian faith throughout history. The commemoration of the saints is not merely a historical exercise but a vibrant and transformative experience. It offers a glimpse into the lives of extraordinary individuals who dedicated their lives to preserving and propagating the Christian faith. Through their stories, we are reminded of the power of faith, the importance of unwavering commitment, and the beauty of a life lived in service to God and humanity.

The Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, and Ephesus also hold a prominent place in the commemoration of the saints. Why do are these commemorated? These gatherings brought together prominent theologians and church leaders to address critical issues facing the early church and define essential doctrines that would shape the foundations of Christianity. By recollecting all these saints and events, our hearts are enlightened with their impact. But how do these impact us today?

Ecumenical Councils

In the year 325 AD, the Council of Nicea marked the first ecumenical council, marking a significant milestone in Christianity. This gathering of bishops and church leaders, numbering

approximately 318, was not merely another council, but rather the first ecumenical council, a distinction that set it apart from previous assemblies.

The term "ecumenical" holds great significance in the context of Christianity. Derived from the Greek word "oikoumene," meaning "the inhabited world," it denotes the pursuit of unity and cooperation among Christian churches worldwide. The Council of Nicea embodied this spirit, as it brought together representatives from different regions and denominations, united in their shared faith.

Several factors contributed to the unique status of the Council of Nicea as an ecumenical council. Firstly, its convening was authorized by the Roman Emperor Constantine I. Constantine's involvement lent an air of legitimacy and authority to the council, ensuring that its decisions would carry weight and be recognized by a broad spectrum of Christians.

Secondly, the Council of Nicea addressed matters of fundamental importance to the Christian faith. It focused on theological controversies, particularly the nature of Christ and his relationship with God the Father. The creed that emerged from the council, known as the Nicene Creed, became a foundational statement of faith for many Christian denominations.

Thirdly, the Council of Nicea established a precedent for future ecumenical councils. It set the stage for regular gatherings of church leaders to discuss and resolve doctrinal and ecclesiastical issues that affected the entire Christian community. These subsequent ecumenical councils, such as the Council of Constantinople in 381 AD and the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, built upon the legacy of Nicea and contributed to the development of a unified Christian tradition.

In essence, the Council of Nicea marked a turning point in the history of Christianity. It showcased the potential for unity and cooperation among different Christian communities, paving the way for future ecumenical councils and shaping the course of Christian theology and practice for centuries to come.

The First Apostolic Sees

Although the Council of Nicaea, held in 325 AD, was a significant event in the history of Christianity, marking the first ecumenical council of the Church, it is important to note that the Council of Nicaea was not the first council convened by the Christian Church. Prior to the Council of Nicaea, the Church had spread throughout the Roman Empire and beyond, establishing five major apostolic sees. These sees were centers of Christian authority and leadership, each associated with one or more of the apostles of Jesus Christ.

Apostolic See	Description
Rome, Italy	Martyrdom and burial place of the apostles St. Paul and St. Peter. Rome became the center of the Western Church and the seat of the Bishop of Rome, known as the Pope
Constantinople, Turkey	Associated with the apostle Andrew. Constantine the Great designated Constantinople as the new capital of the Roman Empire in 330 AD, and the city quickly grew in importance as a center of Christianity.
Alexandria, Egypt	Home to the St. Mark the Evangelist; the Church of Alexandria became one of the most prominent in the early centuries of Christianity. Renowned for its theological school.
Antioch, Turkey	Traditionally considered to be the first see of the apostle Peter; a thriving city where the followers of Jesus were first called "Christians"
Jerusalem, Holy Land	Center of Jesus' ministry and crucifixion; the apostle St. James, the brother of Jesus, led the Church in Jerusalem after Jesus' resurrection

As the churches in each of these apostolic sees grew and developed, they faced a variety of challenges and controversies. To address these issues, local, pre-ecumenical, councils were convened to discuss and resolve theological disputes, establish church policies, and maintain unity among the Christian communities.

Pre-Ecumenical Councils: Council of Jerusalem

One notable example of a pre-ecumenical council is the Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15. This gathering of apostles and elders in Jerusalem was convened to address a pivotal question: Were Gentile converts to Christianity obligated to undergo circumcision and adhere to the Mosaic law? At the heart of the debate was the tension between Jewish and Gentile believers. Many Jewish Christians believed that salvation was only possible through adherence to the Mosaic law, including the rite of circumcision. They argued that Gentile converts should be required to adopt these Jewish practices to be considered full members of the Christian community. The council's decision, known as the "Apostolic Decree," affirmed that Gentile converts were not required to follow these Jewish practices.

At the Council, St. Barnabas and St. Paul told about the miraculous signs and wonders God had done through them among the Gentiles and St. Peter testified that God had shown him that the

Gentiles were not to be excluded from the message of salvation (Acts 15:7–11). After, St. James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church, gave his decision (later known as the "Apostolic Decree") saying, "Therefore I judge that we should not trouble those from among the Gentiles who are turning to God, but that we write to them to abstain from things polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from things strangled, and from blood. For Moses has had throughout many generations those who preach him in every city, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath." (Acts 15:19–21)

In a letter sent to the Church of Antioch, the council expressed that the Holy Spirit had guided their decision. "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burden than these necessary things: that you abstain from things offered to idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from sexual immorality. If you keep yourselves from these, you will do well. Farewell." (Acts 15:28–29)

The council's decision represented a significant step in the development of early Christianity. It marked the recognition of the Gentiles as equal partners in the faith and paved the way for the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the Roman Empire. The Apostolic Decree became a foundational document for the early church, guiding the practice and beliefs of Christians for centuries to come.

The Entirety of the Pre-Ecumenical Councils

Early Christian councils, such as those held in Jerusalem, Rome, and Carthage, were instrumental in shaping the practices and beliefs of the early Christian Church. These councils brought together representatives from different Christian communities to discuss and decide on matters of doctrine, discipline, and practice.

One important function of the early Christian councils was to emphasize Christian identity. In a world dominated by paganism, it was essential for Christians to define themselves and their beliefs. Eventually, the Council of Ephesus, held in 381 AD, issued a creed known as the Nicene Creed. This creed summarized the basic beliefs of Christianity and became a standard for Christian orthodoxy. It affirmed the belief in one God, the divinity of Jesus Christ, and the Holy Trinity.

The early Christian councils played a vital role in the development of Christianity. They established guidelines for Gentile converts, emphasized Christian identity, addressed theological controversies, and helped to shape the practices and beliefs of the early Christian Church. Their decisions continue to influence Christian thought and practice today.

Council	Date	Purpose	Outcome
Council of Jerusalem	49 AD	To address the issue of whether Gentile converts should be required to observe the Law of Moses	Gentile converts were not required to observe the Law of Moses, but they should abstain from certain practices considered offensive to Jewish sensibilities.
Council of Rome	155 AD	To address the issue of Quartodecimanism, the practice of celebrating Easter on the 14th day of Nisan regardless of the day of the week	The council failed to reach a consensus, and the practice of Quartodecimanism continued in some regions for several more centuries.
Council of Ephesus	193 AD	To decree that Easter should be celebrated on Sunday, rather than Passover	This decision was made to dissociate Christianity from Judaism and establish a distinct Christian identity.
Council of Carthage	251 AD	To address the issue of Lapsi bishops, who had renounced their faith during times of persecution and later returned to the Church	Lapsi bishops could be reinstated if they demonstrated genuine repentance and underwent a period of penance.
Council of Iconium	258 AD	To confirm the decrees of the Council of Carthage and issue additional canons to address related issues	Additional canons were issued to address issues such as the treatment of lapsed Christians and the regulation of clerical discipline.
Council of Antioch	264 AD	To address the teachings of Paul of Samosata, the bishop of Antioch, who denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ	Paul's teachings were condemned as heretical, and he was deposed from his position as bishop.
Council of Arabia	246–247 AD	To address the teachings of Beryllus, the bishop of Bostra, who maintained that the soul perished after death and would eventually be resurrected with the body	Beryllus's views were condemned as heretical.

Council	Date	Purpose	Outcome
Council of Elvira	306 AD	To discuss issues of order, discipline, and conduct among the Christian community	The council adopted 81 canons that addressed topics such as the proper observance of Sunday, the prohibition of certain pagan practices, the regulation of clergy conduct, and the establishment of guidelines for the administration of penance.
Council of Ancyra	314 AD	To address the growing influence of Donatism, a schismatic movement that rejected the authority of the Roman Catholic Church	The council adopted canons that condemned Donatism and established guidelines for the reconciliation of Donatists to the Catholic Church.
Synod of Neo-Caesarea	314 AD	Sought to regulate and maintain order within the Church, emphasizing the importance of moral conduct and spiritual discipline among the clergy and laity.	Convened under the leadership of Basil, Bishop of Neo-Caesarea, established a set of 15 canons that would later gain recognition as ecumenical in 451 at the Council of Chalcedon. These canons addressed diverse aspects of church life, providing guidance on matters such as the marriages of priests, second marriages, penances for various sins, and the responsibilities of deacons.

Then Came Arius

Arius, a fourth-century priest, propounded a controversial doctrine that challenged the traditional understanding of the relationship between God the Father and God the Son. Central to his belief was the assertion that "if the Father begat the Son, he that was begotten had a beginning of existence." This statement implied that there was a time when the Son did not exist, contradicting the orthodox view of the Son's eternal nature.

Arius's belief stemmed from his interpretation of several biblical passages. He cited Jesus' words in John 14:28, "If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I," as evidence that the Father possessed a higher status than the Son. Additionally, he pointed to Proverbs 8:22, "The Lord created me at the beginning of his work," to suggest that the Son was created by God. Arius also drew upon Isaiah 46:9, "I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me," to emphasize the uniqueness and indivisibility of God's essence.

Arius's fundamental presupposition was that the divine essence is an indivisible unity, incapable of being divided or distributed. From this perspective, he argued that it was impossible for God to "beget" a divine Son, as such an act would involve dividing the inherently indivisible. Therefore, he concluded that the Son must have been created rather than uncreated.

Arius placed the Son within the category of creatures, although acknowledging his exalted status above all other created beings. However, he maintained that the Son could not be considered eternal in the same sense as the Father. "There was a time when he was not," Arius declared. He further asserted that if God and Christ were equal, then Christ should be called God's brother, not God's son.

Arius's teachings generated significant controversy and opposition within the Christian community, particularly from those who held to the traditional view of the Trinity. The Council of Nicaea, convened in 325 AD, condemned Arius's doctrine, reaffirming the deity of Christ and his eternal existence. The Nicene Creed, formulated at the council, declared that the Son is "begotten, not made" and "of one substance with the Father." This creed became a pivotal statement of Christian orthodoxy, solidifying the belief in the equality and divinity of the Father and the Son.

Then came Athanasius...

Athanasius was born in 295 AD in Egypt, near Alexandria. It was by the water's edge that Bishop Alexander first encountered Athanasius, recognizing his potential and inviting him to serve as his secretary. Around the year 318 AD, at approximately 25 years of age, Athanasius wrote his book titled, "On the Incarnation" which explored the profound mystery of Christ's divinity and humanity, laying the groundwork for his unwavering stance against Arianism.

In 325 AD, Athanasius attended the Council of Nicaea as deacon and the secretary of Pope Alexander. It was at this crucial gathering that he emerged as a passionate defender of the full divinity of Jesus Christ. With eloquence and conviction, he argued against the heretical teachings of Arius, who sought to diminish the divine nature of Christ. Following the departure of Pope Alexander in 328 AD, Athanasius was elevated to the position of Pope of Alexandria. For an extraordinary 48 years, he steered his flock with unwavering dedication and theological brilliance. He became a beacon of orthodoxy and a staunch opponent of Arianism, which had begun to spread like wildfire.

In his book "De Decretis," Athanasius forcefully refuted the Arian heresy, which sought to diminish the divinity of Jesus Christ. He argued eloquently against the notion that the Son was a created being, subject to change and variation like all rational creatures. Instead, he upheld the true

and natural divinity of Christ, emphasizing that He was eternally begotten of the Father and of the same essence.

Against Arianism

Arianism, a significant theological controversy in early Christianity, centered around the teachings of Arius, a presbyter from Alexandria, Egypt. According to Arius, Jesus Christ, the incarnate Logos, was not eternally existent but rather a created being. This belief challenged the fundamental doctrine of the Trinity, asserting that only the Son was directly begotten by God the Father, before all ages, and that the Son's essence or substance was distinct from, though similar to, that of the Creator. Arius's opponents argued that this view made Jesus less than fully divine and therefore heretical.

Regarding who created the Son, several refutations could be made. One such argument comes from Isaiah 43:11, which states, "I, even I, am the LORD, and besides me there is no savior." Another passage, Colossians 1:15, refers to Jesus as "the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation." Additionally, 1 Corinthians 8:6 emphasizes "there is one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we for Him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things, and through whom we live." Finally, John 17:21, presents the argument of unity, stating "they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You."

The Nicene Creed, formulated during the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD, played a pivotal role in addressing Arianism. The central term used in the creed to describe the relationship between the Father and the Son is *homoousios* (Ancient Greek: ὁμοούσιος), meaning "of the same substance" or "of one being." This term affirmed the essential unity and equality of the Father and the Son, refuting the Arian notion of a distinction in substance. The Nicene Creed is an even more explicit anti-Arian statement on the Trinity. It declares that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all of the same divine essence and power, rejecting any notion of inferiority or subordination.

The primary concern of the Council of Nicaea was the exact relationship between God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ, and the nature of the Son of God. (Refer to Paul of Samosata, and the Synods of Antioch.) While Arius acknowledged Jesus Christ's divinity and mission for the salvation of mankind, he asserted that Jesus was not equal to God the Father in terms of rank and primordial origin. Additionally, Arius believed that the Holy Spirit, the power of God the Father, was not equal to either God the Father or the Son of God. Under Arianism, Christ was not considered to be of the same essence or being as God the Father, as Arius argued that both the Father and the Son were made of "like" essence or being, rather than identical essence or being. "The Son [then,] is a creature and a work; neither is he like in essence to the Father; neither is he the true and natural Word of the Father;

neither is he his true wisdom; but he is one of the things made and created and is called the Word and Wisdom by an abuse of terms... Wherefore he by nature subject to change and variation, as are all rational creatures." (Arius)

Terminologies

The debates during the Council of Nicaea centered around the distinction between being "born" or "created" and being "begotten." Arians, followers of Arius, viewed these terms as fundamentally equivalent, while Pope Alexander of Alexandria and his supporters disagreed. Many of the words employed in these discussions, such as "essence" (ousia), "substance" (hypostasis), "nature" (physis) and "person" (prosopon) inherited multiple meanings from pre-Christian philosophers. This led to misunderstandings and confusion until the Cappadocian Fathers, particularly St. Basil of Caesarea, St. Gregory of Nazianzus, and St. Gregory of Nyssa, intervened.

Under their influence, the terminology used in the debates was clarified and standardized. They defined "hypostasis" as a distinct individual existence within the Godhead, while "ousia" referred to the shared divine essence. As a result, the phrase "three hypostases in one ousia" emerged as an accurate representation of the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, asserting that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons but share the same divine nature.

This clarification was crucial in resolving misunderstandings and establishing a common language for theological discussions. However, the nuances and complexities of these terms continued to be debated and refined throughout the early centuries of Christianity, contributing to the development of subsequent theological concepts and doctrines.

St. Basil of Caesarea, a prominent theologian of the 4th century, argues that the terms "ousia" (essence or substance) and "hypostasis" (person or subsistence) are not synonymous and should not be used interchangeably when referring to the Godhead. He draws an analogy to the distinction between a general concept and a particular instance. For example, "animal" represents a general concept, while "a particular man" represents a specific instance of that concept. Similarly, in the context of the Godhead, St. Basil asserts that we recognize one essence or substance to avoid introducing multiple definitions of existence. However, we also acknowledge distinct hypostases or persons—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—to ensure clarity and prevent confusion in our understanding of each.

Nicene Conclusion

St. Athanasius delved deeply into the profound mystery of the incarnation, underscoring its pivotal purpose in reversing the corruption that had ensnared humanity. He posited that the divine Word, being immortal and one with the Father, could not directly experience death. However, recognizing that mortality was the only means to undo human corruption, the Word ingeniously assumed a mortal body.: “for the Word, realizing that in no other way would the corruption of human beings be undone except, simply, by dying, **yet being immortal** and the Son of the Father of the Word was not able to die, for this reason he takes to himself a body capable of death, **in order that it, participating in the Word who is above all, might be sufficient for death on behalf of all, and through the indwelling Word would remain incorruptible**, and so corruption might henceforth cease from all by the grace of the resurrection.”

By uniting with a body susceptible to death, the Word, who transcends all creation, enabled that body to bear the weight of death on behalf of all humanity. Crucially, the indwelling presence of the immortal Word within this mortal vessel ensured that it would remain incorruptible, even in the face of death.

The Nicene Creed of 325 therefore concluded to the following statement “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 quick and the dead. And in the Holy Spirit.”

Emperor Constantine then produced an edict against the Arians stating, “in addition, if any writing composed by Arius should be found, it should be handed over to the flames, so that not only will the wickedness of his teaching be obliterated, but nothing will be left even to remind anyone of him. And I hereby make a public order, that if someone should be discovered to have hidden a writing composed by Arius, and not to have immediately brought it forward and destroyed it by fire, his penalty shall be death. As soon as he is discovered in this offense, he shall be submitted for capital punishment.”

The condemnation of Arianism at the Council of Nicaea was a significant event in the history of Christianity. It established the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, emphasizing the essential unity and equality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. However, Arianism continued to influence various Christian groups, particularly in the Germanic kingdoms of the early Middle Ages. It was not until the Visigothic Kingdom of Spain officially adopted Catholicism in the 6th century that Arianism was finally eradicated from Western Europe.

The Other Results of Nicaea

The Council of Nicea, although renowned for its definitive stance against Arianism and its formulation of the Nicene Creed, the council encompassed a broader agenda aimed at fostering unity and harmony among churches across the world.

One significant matter addressed at the council was the establishment of a unified calendar for determining the date of Easter. Prior to Nicea, different regions followed varying practices, leading to confusion and inconsistencies in the observance of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The controversy between those who argued for independent computations and those who argued for continued reliance on the Jewish calendar was formally resolved by the Council, which endorsed the independent procedure that had been in use for some time at Rome and Alexandria. The council decreed that Easter should be celebrated on the first Sunday after the first full moon following the spring equinox, ensuring a standardized approach across all Christian communities.

Bishop Melitius of Egypt played a significant role in the Council of Nicaea. He had been imprisoned with Bishop Peter during the Diocletian persecution in 305/306 AD and bravely advocated for the open practice of Christianity during times of persecution. However, he faced opposition from a rival bishop named Paulinus, and his episcopate was marked by a schism known as the Meletian Schism. Due to this schism, Melitius was exiled from Antioch on three separate occasions: 361–362, 365–366, and 371–378. His removal from Antioch aimed to resolve the schism and restore unity within the church. The Meletian Schism had a lasting impact on the Christian community in Egypt and the broader region, leading to debates and discussions about episcopal authority and the proper response to persecution.

Another matter that received considerable attention was the issue of ecclesiastical jurisdiction and the authority of bishops. The council sought to define the boundaries of each bishop's authority and establish a hierarchical structure within the church. This move aimed to prevent disputes and ensure orderly administration, as well as to maintain the unity of the faith.

Furthermore, the Council of Nicea addressed various theological and doctrinal matters, aiming to clarify and codify beliefs and practices. It condemned heretical teachings that deviated from the core doctrines of Christianity and affirmed the divinity of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Additionally, the council established guidelines for the proper conduct of clergy and laypeople, emphasizing the importance of ethical behavior and moral standards. The council concluded with the following 20 canons:

Canon	Prohibition/Establishment	Purpose
1	Prohibition of Self-Castration for Clergy	Uphold the sanctity of the human body and maintain physical integrity for those serving in the church.
2	Establishment of a Minimum Term for Catechumens	Ensure catechumens have sufficient time to deepen their understanding of the faith and develop a genuine commitment to Christ.
3	Prohibition of Suspicious Female Presence in Clergy Households	Preserve the reputation and integrity of the clergy by preventing any potential temptations or misunderstandings.
4	Ordination of a Bishop	Ordination of a bishop in the presence of at least three provincial bishops, and confirmation by the metropolitan bishop.
5	Provision for 2 Annual Provincial Synods	Foster communication, collaboration, and decision-making among bishops and church leaders.
6	Confirmation of Ancient Customs giving jurisdiction over large regions to the bishops of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.	Recognize the historical significance and apostolic tradition of the bishops of Alexandria, Rome, and Antioch.
7	Recognition of the Honorary Rights of the See of Jerusalem	Acknowledge the special significance of Jerusalem in Christian history and emphasize its spiritual and historical importance.
8	Provision for Agreement with Novatianists	Promote unity and reconciliation by encouraging an agreement with an early Christian sect.
9-14	Mild Procedure for the Lapsed during Licinius' Persecution	Provide a mild and compassionate approach toward those who lapsed in faith under pressure, emphasizing pastoral care and reconciliation.

Canon	Prohibition/Establishment	Purpose
15-16	Prohibition of the Removal of Priests	Uphold the stability and order of the clergy by protecting the rights and dignity of priests while ensuring accountability.
17	Prohibition of Usury among the Clergy	Maintain ethical standards and prevent exploitation by forbidding clergy members from engaging in usury.
18	Precedence of Bishops and Presbyters, before deacons, in Receiving the Eucharist	Establish the hierarchical order by ensuring bishops and presbyters receive the Eucharist before deacons.
19	Declaration of the Invalidity of Baptism by Paulian Heretics	Safeguard the integrity and authenticity of the baptismal sacrament by declaring baptism performed by Paulian heretics to be invalid.
20	Prohibition of Kneeling on Sundays and during Pentecost, the fifty days commencing on Easter.	Maintain uniformity in worship and highlight the festive nature of these periods by prohibiting kneeling.



Review Questions

1. There are 22 Canons in the Orthodox church to follow.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
2. Arianism was fought against by Emperor Constantine.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
3. What was the debate about Arianism?
 - a. The difference between being “born” or “created” and being “begotten”**
 - b. The existence of God
 - c. The role of the Holy Spirit
 - d. The authority of the Bible
4. The Council of Nicea was the first ecumenical council.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
5. Athanasius argues against Arianism.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
6. What were other outcomes of the Nicean Council?
 - a. Easter to be celebrated on Sunday independent of the Jewish calendar
 - b. the Meletian Schism
 - c. the development of the 20 Canons
 - d. All of the above**
7. Which of the following are Pre-ecumenical councils?
 - a. Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Ephesus
 - b. Councils of Chalcedon, Ephesus, Rome
 - c. Councils of Jerusalem, Antioch, Iconium**
8. What did Arius believe?
 - a. The Son of God was created by the Father**
 - b. The Son of God is co-eternal with the Father
 - c. The Son of God is greater than the Father
 - d. The Son of God is subordinate to the Father
9. Which cities were the first Apostolic Sees?
 - a. London, Paris, Berlin, Madrid, and Rome
 - b. Athens, Sparta, Corinth, Thebes, and Delphi
 - c. Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Constantinople**
 - d. Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, Amman, and Jerusalem
10. One of Bishop Melitius’ achievements is that he advocated for the practice of Christianity in times of persecution.
 - a. True**

b. False



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Council of Constantinople & Canons

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Upholding the Unity of the Church

The Council of Constantinople, convened in 381 AD by Roman Emperor Theodosius I in Constantinople, served as an important gathering of Christian bishops. The council primarily focused on addressing two notable heresies that had emerged within the Church at the time. The first heresy, known as Macedonianism, challenged the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The second heresy, proclaimed by Apollinarius, claimed that Jesus Christ was not in need of a soul.

Approximately 150 bishops attended the Council of Constantinople, representing various Christian communities across the Roman Empire. These bishops engaged in theological discussions, scriptural analysis, and debates to address the prevailing heresies and reaffirm the orthodox beliefs of the Church. The council's deliberations resulted in the condemnation of Arianism and Macedonianism. The expanded Nicene Creed, incorporating these condemnations, became a cornerstone of Christian doctrine and remains an essential statement of faith to this day.

The Council of Constantinople played a crucial role in upholding the unity of the Church by providing a forum for theological reflection and consensus building. It fortified the Church's understanding of the Trinity and contributed to the ongoing development of Christian theology. The council's decisions had a profound impact, shaping the beliefs and practices of Christians for centuries to come.

Historical Background

The Arian heresy, which denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ, persisted after the Council of Nicaea in 325. Despite the condemnation of Arianism by the council, it continued to gain adherents, particularly in the Eastern Roman Empire. This was largely due to the support of Emperor Constantius II, who succeeded his father Constantine the Great in 337 and was sympathetic to the Arian cause. Constantius's patronage of Arianism enabled its proponents to spread their beliefs more freely and to gain influence within the Church.

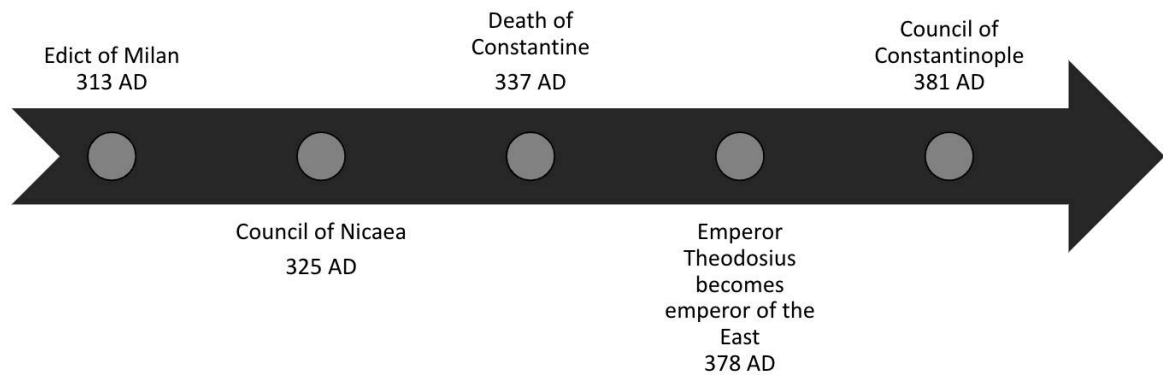
Around 360 AD, theological debates shifted from the divinity of the Son to the divinity of the Holy Spirit. The Council of Nicaea, though recognizing the Trinity, had not explicitly addressed the nature of the Holy Spirit, leaving room for interpretation. This resulted in the emergence of a new group of heretics known as the Macedonians, who denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. Their beliefs, known as Pneumatomachianism, posed a significant challenge to the Church's understanding of the Trinity.

In 380, Emperor Theodosius I ascended to the imperial throne and initiated a campaign to restore the Eastern Church to Nicene Christianity. Theodosius sought to unify the entire empire behind the orthodox faith and recognized the need for a church council to address outstanding matters of faith and discipline. He worked closely with St. Gregory Nazianzus, a prominent theologian and bishop, who shared Theodosius's desire for unity within Christianity.

In the spring of 381, the Second Ecumenical Council was convened in Constantinople. This council brought together bishops and theologians from across the Eastern Roman Empire to address the Arian heresy and the Pneumatomachianism of the Macedonians. After extensive debate and discussion, the council fathers reaffirmed the Nicene Creed and clarified the divinity of the Holy Spirit, declaring that the Spirit is fully God and equal in essence with the Father and the Son. This council played a pivotal role in establishing the orthodox understanding of the Trinity, which is still held by the Christian Church today.

Events Leading Up

When Abba Petros II, the patriarch of Alexandria, passed away, the mantle of leadership fell upon Timotheos, a disciple of the revered St. Athanasius. Timotheos thus became the twenty-second successor of St. Mark the Apostle, an illustrious line of patriarchs who had safeguarded the Christian faith in Alexandria since apostolic times. However, this period was not without its challenges, as a new heresy emerged, propagated by Macedonius, the bishop of Constantinople.



Macedonius proclaimed his denial of the divinity of the Holy Spirit. This grave theological deviation sent shockwaves through the Church, prompting deep concern among the bishops. They recognized their sacred duty as custodians of the apostolic legacy and felt an urgent responsibility to address this matter.

Through extensive deliberations and exchanges of views, the bishops arrived at the solemn conclusion that convening another ecumenical council was imperative. Such a gathering would provide a platform for discussing and resolving theological disputes, reaffirming the true faith, and preserving the unity of the Church.

Recognizing the profound significance of the issue at hand, Emperor Theodosius himself shared the conviction of the bishops regarding the necessity of such an assembly. He extended an invitation to all bishops to gather in Constantinople in May of 381 A.D. The response to his invitation was overwhelming, as one hundred and fifty bishops responded enthusiastically, eager to participate in this momentous event.

The gathering, subsequently known as the 2nd Ecumenical Council, marked another pivotal moment in Christianity. Its significance was amplified by the presence of Emperor Theodosius, who attended the inaugural session and graced the assembly with a heartfelt address. In his speech, he warmly welcomed the members and expressed his profound joy at their gathering. His presence underscored the gravity of the situation and the importance that both the Church and the Empire attached to the matter.

The 2nd Ecumenical Council stands as a testament to the collective wisdom and dedication of the bishops in safeguarding the purity of Christian doctrine. Through their deliberations, discussions, and resolutions, they sought to uphold the true faith and ensure the preservation of apostolic teachings for generations to come. Their efforts resulted in the reaffirmation of the divinity of the Holy

Spirit, the condemnation of Macedonius and his followers, and the adoption of a creed known as the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed, which remains a foundational statement of Christian belief to this day.

The 2nd Ecumenical Council was another triumph of orthodoxy over heresy, a testament to the enduring power of the Holy Spirit, and a reminder of the Church's commitment to safeguarding the integrity of the Christian faith for all eternity.

The First Heresy

The Council of Constantinople convened in 381 AD to discuss a number of matters. Among the matters discussed and addressed by the Council, the examination and condemnation of the Macedonian heresy took center stage as a top priority. Macedonianism, also known as the Pneumatomachian heresy, posed a significant challenge to the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. Its proponents, led by Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople, denied the full personhood and divinity of the Holy Spirit. According to this heretical teaching, the Holy Spirit was created by the Son and was thus subordinate to the Father and the Son. Pneumatomachians arrived but were said to have refused to even accept the Nicene creed.

St. Gregory of Nazianzus presided over the council yet resigned from the position due to the conflict that arose: "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... I was not happy when I ascended the throne, and gladly would I descend it."

After careful deliberation and analysis, the Council unanimously condemned Macedonianism. As a consequence of this condemnation, the council expanded the Nicene Creed, which had been established in the Council of Nicea in 325 AD, by adding to it the clause concerning the Holy Spirit which is still upheld by all Orthodox Churches to the present day. Furthermore, the Council expanded the Nicene Creed to include other important affirmations of faith. It declared the belief in the universal church, the oneness of baptism and in awaiting the resurrection of the dead and eternal life.

The expanded Nicene Creed, as formulated by the Council of Constantinople, has endured to the present day and is upheld by all Orthodox Churches. It serves as a foundational statement of faith, outlining the core beliefs and doctrines of Christianity. The Council's condemnation of Macedonianism and its subsequent expansion of the Nicene Creed ensured the preservation of orthodox beliefs and the unity of the Church. The Creed was expanded with the following:

“Yes, we believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son, is worshiped and glorified, Who spoke by the prophets. And in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church. We confess one baptism, for the remission of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.”

The added clause begins with a resounding affirmation of belief in the Holy Spirit, acknowledging him as the Lord and the Giver of Life. It emphasizes the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Father, emphasizing his distinct but inseparable relationship with God the Father. Furthermore, the clause affirms that the Holy Spirit is to be worshiped and glorified alongside the Father and the Son, recognizing his equal status within the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is also acknowledged as the source of divine inspiration, having spoken through the prophets of old.

The Second Heresy

The Council of Constantinople addressed yet another heresy that had emerged within the Christian community. This heresy was proclaimed by Apollinarius, the Bishop of Laodicea, who held unorthodox beliefs regarding the nature of Jesus Christ.

Apollinarius acknowledged the divine nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, but did not believe in His complete human nature. He considered that the human nature of Christ was not in need of a soul and thus He was without a soul because God the Logos provided the needed life. This implied that the human nature of Christ was incomplete, lacking an essential component for human existence. The Holy Ecumenical council of Constantinople condemned Apollinarius and rejected his idea declaring it a heresy. The Apollinarius movement may have been an overreaction of Arianism.

The Council emphasized that the Savior must possess both complete divine nature and complete human nature. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, embodying the perfect union of divine and human attributes. This understanding preserves the essential mystery of the Incarnation, where God became man to redeem humanity.

Canonical Outcomes

At the council, a key principle that was brought up and reaffirmed was the prohibition against transferring a bishop from the diocese where they were initially ordained to a different diocese. The canon's text makes it clear that "The bishops are not to go beyond their dioceses to churches lying

outside of their bounds, nor bring confusion on the churches; but let the Bishop of Alexandria, according to the canons, alone administer the affairs of Egypt; and let the bishops of the East manage the East alone, the privileges of the Church in Antioch, which are mentioned in the canons of Nice, being preserved; and let the bishops of the Asian Diocese administer the Asian affairs only; and the Pontic bishops only Pontic matters; and the Thracian bishops only Thracian affairs. And let not bishops go beyond their dioceses for ordination or any other ecclesiastical ministrations, unless they be invited."

The canon further emphasizes that the decision to transfer a bishop should not be made lightly or based solely on the bishop's personal desires or preferences. It requires careful consideration of the broader implications for both dioceses and the well-being of the faithful. Numerous bishops must come together to evaluate the situation, assess the potential benefits and drawbacks, and ultimately make a decision that is in the best interests of both dioceses and the church as a whole.

The canons of Constantinople can be summarized as follows:

Canon	Description
1	Condemns Arianism, Macedonianism, and Apollinarianism.
2	Renews the Nicene legislation imposing diocesan and patriarchal limits on bishops.
3	Declares that the Bishop of Constantinople should have a pre-eminence of honour after the Bishop of Rome.
4	Declares the consecration of Maximus the Cynic as Bishop of Constantinople invalid.

As the council concluded, Saint Timothy, alongside his delegation, embarked on their return journey to Alexandria. The reign of Emperor Theodosius brought forth a tranquil environment, allowing St. Timothy and his followers to bask in the peace it offered. Amidst this peaceful atmosphere, he devoted himself to the construction of numerous churches, endeavoring to restore Orthodoxy among many who had strayed towards Arianism. His prolific writing included several epistles, most of which have unfortunately been lost to time. Additionally, St. Timothy dedicated himself to chronicling the lives of numerous saintly monks, preserving their remarkable stories for posterity. His unwavering dedication to his faith and his role as a spiritual leader left an enduring mark on Christianity, shaping the course of religious thought and practice in Alexandria and beyond.



Review Questions

1. The Council of Constantinople fought against three heresies.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
2. The second heresy claimed and accepted the Divine Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ, but did not believe in His complete human nature.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
3. When the council came to an end, St. Timothy and his delegation returned to Jerusalem.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
4. Constantine's son, Constantius II, was an Arian-leaning emperor.
 - a. True**
 - b. False
5. The Arian heresy had ended after the council of Nicea in 325.
 - a. True
 - b. False**
6. What was the name of the first heresy addressed by the Council of Constantinople?
 - a. Arian heresy
 - b. Nestorian heresy
 - c. Apollinarian heresy
 - d. Macedonian heresy**
7. Who started the second heresy?
 - a. Arias
 - b. Nestorius
 - c. Apollinarius**
 - d. Macedonius
8. What was the purpose of the addition to the Nicene Creed?
 - a. To affirm the divinity of Christ
 - b. To emphasize the humanity of Christ
 - c. To clarify the relationship between the Father and the Son
 - d. To affirm the divinity of the Holy Spirit**
9. What is another outcome of the Council of Constantinople?
 - a. Forbidding the transfer of a bishop from his See to another**
 - b. Excommunication of Arius
 - c. Establishment of the papacy
 - d. Canonization of saints
10. When did the Council of Constantinople first convene?
 - a. 325 AD
 - b. 381 AD**
 - c. 451 AD
 - d. 553 AD



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Council of Ephesus & Canons

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Nestorius

Nestorius was the Patriarch of Constantinople, who was originally from Antioch in Syria, (like St. John Chrysostom.) He was born in 386, and became patriarch in 428 AD, by Emperor Theodosius II, of the Eastern Roman Empire.

Nestorius was originally from the ancient city of Antioch in Syria, where he was born in the year 386 AD. His birthplace shared a rich religious heritage with that of St. John Chrysostom, whose theological prowess had left an indelible mark on the Church. Nestorius, driven by an unquenchable thirst for knowledge and a profound love for the scriptures, immersed himself in theological studies at an early age. His intellectual pursuits led him to Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire, where he gained prominence as a gifted preacher and theologian. His eloquence and erudition captivated the hearts and minds of the faithful, earning him widespread recognition and respect.

In 428 AD, at the direction of Emperor Theodosius II, Nestorius ascended as Patriarch of Constantinople. As patriarch, he assumed spiritual leadership over one of the most influential Christian sees of the time. Nestorius's reign as patriarch was marked by controversy. He held firmly to the belief that the divine and human natures of Jesus Christ existed separately, a view that sparked intense debate and ultimately led to the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD.

A Twofold Heresy

In Christianity, there has been numerous dialogues about the two natures of Christ, known as the Human Person and the Divine Person. While the Coptic Church understands that they coexist as one entity, Nestorius proposed a different interpretation. Nestorius asserted that Christ possessed two distinct and separate natures—a divine nature and a human nature. This view, known as Nestorianism, significantly diverged from the established understanding of Christ's nature.

Nestorius argued that the Divine Christ, representing the divine nature, could not suffer or experience mortality. He believed that it was only the Human Christ, associated with the human

nature, who underwent suffering and crucifixion. This separation between the divine and human aspects of Christ challenged the traditional understanding of Christ's unified nature. Nestorius further argued that since Jesus Christ existed as two separate persons: one human and one divine, Mary should only be referred to as the "Mother of Christ," or "Christotokos," rather than the "Mother of God," or "Theotokos." He emphasized that God the Father was without a mother and father, as He was eternally existing.

The Church strongly opposed his ideas, considering them heretical at the Council of Ephesus, convened in 431 AD, where they officially condemned Nestorianism as contrary to the orthodox faith. The council affirmed that Christ possessed a single, unified nature, encompassing both divine and human elements. The rejection of Nestorianism emphasized the importance of recognizing Christ's divinity and humanity as inseparable aspects of his being. The Church's stance on this issue aimed to safeguard the doctrine of the Incarnation, which asserts that God became fully human in the person of Jesus Christ. Nestorianism's influence persisted despite its condemnation, and it left a lasting impact on Christian thought. However, the overwhelming consensus within Christianity remained that Christ had a single, unified nature, embodying both divine and human characteristics.

St. Cyril; the Pillar of the Faith

Nestorius' teachings faced significant opposition from St. Cyril of Alexandria, who emerged as a staunch defender of the Christian faith against Nestorianism. Born around 376 AD, St. Cyril was the nephew of St. Theophilus, who served as the previous Patriarch of Alexandria. From a young age, St. Cyril received an extensive education encompassing philosophy, rhetoric, and theology. At the age of 36, in 412 AD, he succeeded his uncle as Patriarch of Alexandria, a testament to his remarkable capabilities and unwavering dedication to the faith.

Before assuming the patriarchate, St. Cyril had already gained recognition for his contributions to the Church. Initially, he embraced monasticism, spending time at the St. Macarius monastery in the Scetis (Shiheet) desert, where he devoted himself to prayer, contemplation, and the study of Scripture. Following his time in the monastery, he served as a priest in Alexandria, earning the esteemed title "Pillar of Faith."

While Nestorianism sought to undermine the unity and divinity of Christ, asserting that Jesus had two distinct natures, St. Cyril vehemently opposed this teaching, arguing that such a view compromised the integrity of Christ's personhood and contradicted the fundamental belief in the Incarnation. During the council, St. Cyril played a central role in condemning Nestorianism as a heresy

and affirming the orthodox position that Jesus Christ is fully God and fully human, united in one person.

St. Cyril's legacy extends beyond his opposition to Nestorianism. He is revered for his extensive writings, including commentaries on Scripture, theological treatises, and homilies. His works provide valuable insights into the early Church's understanding of Christology, the Trinity, and other core doctrines. St. Cyril's contributions have significantly influenced Christian thought and spirituality, and he continues to be recognized as a Pillar in the Orthodox Faith.

Events Leading Up to the Council

In the year 428, Nestorius, the newly appointed Patriarch of Constantinople, delivered a series of sermons that would ignite this heated theological controversy. Nestorius's sermons primarily centered around his opposition to the use of the term "Theotokos" (God-bearer) to refer to the Virgin Mary, arguing that it implied that Mary had given birth to the divine nature of Christ rather than simply his human nature. This stance directly challenged the prevailing understanding and veneration of Mary within the Christian community.

Nestorius's claims were met with swift opposition from several individuals. Eusebius, a prominent layman and future bishop of Dorylaeum, was the first to refute Nestorius's arguments. Eusebius eloquently defended the traditional view of Mary as the Theotokos, arguing that her role in Christ's incarnation was essential and inseparable from his divinity.

Joining Eusebius in their condemnation of Nestorius were two priests from Constantinople, Philip and Proclus. Both Philip and Proclus had previously been candidates for the patriarchal position in Constantinople and were well-respected theologians in their own right. They accused Nestorius of heresy and composed refutations against his teachings. While Philip's refutation was unfortunately lost to history, Proclus's work remains preserved in Christian archives, offering valuable insights into the theological debates of the time.

The controversy surrounding Nestorius's teachings quickly spread throughout Constantinople, and the city's inhabitants, who were initially receptive to their foreign Patriarch, began to harbor doubts and suspicions about his beliefs. It is worth considering the potential impact if Nestorius had preached his ideas in his hometown of Antioch. Given his charisma and influence, there is a possibility that his teachings could have gained wider acceptance and caused a profound rift within Christianity.

As the heresy gained notoriety, Pope Celestine, the patriarch of Rome, added his voice to the growing chorus of opposition. He denounced Nestorius's views and urged Christians to remain

steadfast in their faith. St. Cyril, the patriarch of Alexandria, embarked on a mission to combat the spread of Nestorianism. He composed and circulated refutations of Nestorius's teachings, initially without naming him directly. However, recognizing the importance of confronting the issue head-on, St. Cyril later wrote directly to Nestorius, rebuking his theological positions.

Nestorius responded to St. Cyril's letter, accusing him of unfairly attacking his character and questioning his motives. St. Cyril, in turn, clarified that his intent was not to personally attack Nestorius but to fulfill his pastoral duty to protect his flock from doctrinal deviations. He went on to explain why Nestorius's ideas were heretical, emphasizing that Christ was not merely a human being but fully divine and that Mary, as the Theotokos, had a crucial role in his incarnation: "...you have no power to fight against God Who was crucified for us in truth; and died in the body, although He is continually living in the power of His Godhead; it is He who sits at the Right Hand of the Father while the angels, principalities and powers worship Him."

Despite St. Cyril's efforts and the growing criticism from various quarters, Nestorius refused to retract his teachings. He sought the support of Emperor Theodosius II, who attempted to intimidate St. Cyril by threatening him. However, by this time, the Christian world had largely turned against Nestorius and his beliefs. The controversy culminated in the convening of the Council of Ephesus in 431, where Nestorius was officially condemned and deposed as patriarch.

The 1st Alexandrine Council

St. Cyril convened a local council in Alexandria, gathering the bishops of Egypt to address a pressing theological matter. During the council, the assembled fathers reaffirmed their commitment to the Nicene Creed, which served as the foundational statement of Christian faith. Additionally, they approved an Introduction to the Creed, authored by St. Cyril himself. This introduction, recited to this day, serves as a preliminary statement that precedes the testimony of faith ("We exalt You").

Following the council, the bishops wrote letters to other heads of churches, seeking their support and approval of the decisions made in Alexandria. The letters were addressed to the Bishop of Antioch, the Bishop of Jerusalem, the Bishop of Rome, and the Bishop of Aleppo. Each bishop responded in writing, expressing their approval and agreement with the actions taken by the council.

After receiving the positive response from Pope Celestine, the bishop of Rome, St. Cyril felt emboldened to take further steps. He wrote letters directly to the Emperor in Rome, the Empress, and the Emperor's three sisters. In his letters, St. Cyril meticulously explained the subtle deviations from Orthodox teachings present in the Nestorian concept. He appealed to the Emperor to intervene and convince Nestorius of his theological errors.

In his letters to the Empress and the Emperor's sisters, St. Cyril emphasized the importance of their influence in preserving Orthodoxy. He urged them to use their positions to safeguard the unity and integrity of the Christian faith. Additionally, he included a list of verses from both the Old and New Testaments that spoke of Jesus Christ as God incarnate, emphasizing the absence of any separateness or division within His divine nature. To conclude his efforts, St. Cyril then convened again for a second council in Alexandria.

The 2nd Alexandrine Council

The Second Council of Alexandria convened with the intent of once again attempting to persuade Nestorius to recognize and rectify his theological errors. To accomplish this, the council resolved to compose another letter to him. This letter would comprise two distinct parts. The first part was to be an exposition of the Nicene Creed, which served as a foundational document for Christian doctrine. By presenting a detailed explanation of the creed, the council sought to provide Nestorius with a clear understanding of the orthodox beliefs regarding the nature of Christ. This exposition aimed to demonstrate how Nestorius's views deviated from the established teachings of the Church.

"Conforming to the faith of the fathers, we declare that the unique Logos of God has taken the flesh of the Virgin. Has made this flesh His own, submitting Himself to human birth, passed out of the Virgin's womb as a child without ceasing to be what He is and remaining in the body as He is, namely Very God by nature. The flesh was not changed into the nature of the divine, just as the divine Logos was not changed into the nature of the flesh for It was not submitted to any change. Being yet a child, and even while in the tomb of His Mother, the Logos filled the entire world, He governed it conjointly with His Father and the Holy Spirit, for divinity knows no limit. The Logos is united to the flesh hypostatically. We therefore believe in one single Son and Lord, Jesus Christ; we separate not the man from the God; we do not believe that He is simply united under the semblance of dignity and power; these are new words alien to the faith. If we, too, say, as did St. Paul in Colossians 2:9 that in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, we see that God dwells not in Him as He dwells in His saints. But that the divine and the human were united in our Lord Jesus Christ in the fashion that the soul is united to the body in a human being. There is, therefore, one Christ, one Son, one Lord." If he were really 'Orthodox' as he had claimed, Nestorius was asked to prove it by signing both the letter and the anathema. Thus he would vindicate himself and clarify his attitude before all believers."

The second part of the letter was intended to serve as an affirmation of the true faith, as defined by the council. This section would expound upon the correct understanding of the person and work of Christ, emphasizing the unity of His divine and human natures. The council intended to articulate the orthodox position in such a way that it would leave no room for misinterpretation or ambiguity.

In addition to the exposition and affirmation, the letter would also include twelve anathemas. These anathemas were designed to condemn specific heretical teachings attributed to Nestorius. Each anathema would target a particular aspect of Nestorius's theology that the council deemed to be in contradiction with the true faith. By issuing these anathemas, the council sought to definitively reject and repudiate Nestorius's views, making it clear that his teachings were incompatible with Christian orthodoxy.

The Twelve Anathema

- 1 If anyone does not confess that Emmanuel is God in truth, and therefore that the holy virgin is the mother of God ... let him be **anathema**.
- 2 If anyone does not confess that the Word from God the Father has been united by hypostasis ... is therefore God and man together, let him be **anathema**.
- 3 If anyone divides in the one Christ the hypostases after the union ... let him be **anathema**.
- 4 If anyone distinguishes between the two persons or hypostases the expressions used either in the gospels or in the apostolic writings ... let him be **anathema**.
- 5 If anyone dares to say that Christ was a God-bearing man and not rather God in truth, ... let him be **anathema**.
- 6 If anyone says that the Word from God the Father was the God or master of Christ, and does not rather confess the same both God and man, the Word having become flesh, according to the scriptures, let him be **anathema**.
- 7 If anyone says that as man Jesus was activated by the Word of God and was clothed with the glory of the Only-begotten, as a being separate from him, let him be **anathema**.
- 8 If anyone dares to say that Christ's human nature should be worshiped separately from His divine nature ... , let him be **anathema**.
- 9 If anyone says that the one Lord Jesus Christ was empowered by an external Spirit, rather than by His own Spirit, to perform miracles and overcome evil, ... let him be **anathema**.
- 10 If anyone claims that it was not the very Word of God who became our high priest and apostle as a man, but someone separate from Him, or says that He offered sacrifice for Himself and not solely for us ... , let him be **anathema**.
- 11 If anyone does not confess that the flesh of the Lord is life-giving and belongs to the Word from God the Father, but maintains that it belongs to another besides him, united with him in dignity or as enjoying a mere divine indwelling, ... , let him be **anathema**.
- 12 If anyone does not confess that the Word of God suffered in the flesh and was crucified in the flesh and tasted death in the flesh and became the first born of the dead, although as God he is life and life-giving, let him be **anathema**.

Through this carefully crafted letter, the Second Council of Alexandria aimed to provide Nestorius with a comprehensive presentation of the true faith, as well as a clear condemnation of his erroneous beliefs. The council hoped that by engaging with Nestorius in this manner, they might persuade him to abandon his misguided ideas and embrace the orthodox teachings of the Church.

Alongside the second letter addressed to Nestorius, the Council of Ephesus dispatched two additional letters simultaneously. The first letter was directed to the priests, deacons, and people of Constantinople, while the second was intended for the monks residing in the city. In both letters, the Council implored Nestorius to sign a document acknowledging his agreement with the Council's position. However, Nestorius adamantly refused to comply, prompting him to seek assistance from the Emperor of the East. Subsequently, the Emperor threatened Saint Cyril in an attempt to influence the Council's proceedings and protect Nestorius. This act of interference by the Emperor further escalated the tensions between the Council of Ephesus and Nestorius, leading to a prolonged conflict.

The Ecumenical Council

As opposition to the heresy of Nestorianism intensified, the people of Constantinople urged Emperor Theodosius II to call a council to address the matter. The Emperor, realizing the urgency, had no choice but to send out invitations to all the bishops of the Christian world, asking them to convene in Ephesus during the summer of 431 AD. The date of the council, the day after Pentecost, has been traditionally used for the Holy Synod to convene to this day. Upon receiving the letter, St. Cyril, the Patriarch of Alexandria, organized a group of clergy to sail with him to Ephesus. Among them was the fiery St. Shenouda the Archimandrite of Akhmim, known for his unwavering commitment to the Nicene Creed.

Approximately 200 bishops descended upon Ephesus, each representing their respective dioceses and eager to stand up for the Nicene Creed, which had been challenged by Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius, accompanied by 40 of his followers, also arrived in Ephesus. He was joined by a large group of armed men under the command of a nobleman named Candidian, who had been designated as the Emperor's representative at the council. Candidian, however, instead of remaining neutral, decided to support Nestorius fully. Unfortunately, the representative from Antioch was delayed in his arrival. Although he was a friend of Nestorius, he sent two of his bishops ahead to inform the council not to wait for him.

On June 22, the council convened in the church of "The Mother of God" in Ephesus. A meeting was established, and St. Cyril was voted to preside over the council proceedings. The council members

sent three different summons to Nestorius, requesting his presence. Despite being in the city, Nestorius refused to attend. Consequently, the council proceeded with its deliberations without him. The Council of Ephesus consisted of seven sessions, each dedicated to addressing various aspects of the Nestorian heresy and reaffirming the Nicene Creed.

The Seven Sessions of Ephesus

The Council of Ephesus, convened in 431 AD, comprised a series of significant sessions that addressed various matters pertaining to the church and its doctrines.

1st Session:

The first session of the council commenced with the recitation of the Creed, followed by discussions on Nestorius's heresy. St. Cyril's letters and Anathemas were presented, along with Nestorius's reply. After careful deliberation, the council came to a unanimous decision that Nestorius should be excommunicated, degraded, and deposed from his position. Subsequently, a letter was dispatched to the clergy and church members, informing them of the council's resolution.

2nd Session:

The second session witnessed the arrival of John of Antioch, but he was intercepted by the emperor's army and compelled to hold a separate council. In this rival council, St. Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus were deposed in retaliation. Nestorius, in collaboration with the emperor, attempted to overthrow the Bishop of Ephesus and install a new leader. Additionally, they prohibited the council from conducting liturgies, prompting an uprising among the people of Ephesus. However, the timely arrival of the Bishop of Rome and his representatives bolstered the council's decision to excommunicate Nestorius.

3rd Session:

During the third session, the council reviewed the decision with the delegates from Rome who arrived later. A consensus was reached, with both the Eastern and Western churches officially excommunicating Nestorius and his followers. A letter conveying this decision was sent to the emperor and the people of Constantinople, urging the emperor to reconsider his earlier stance.

4th Session:

The fourth session convened in the church to address the emperor's decision to depose St. Cyril and Memnon, the Bishop of Ephesus. The council sought the attendance of John of Antioch, but

he declined. Notably, St. Cyril and Memnon intentionally absented themselves to ensure unbiased deliberations. As a result, the council resolved, as a church, not to depose or excommunicate the two bishops.

5th Session:

The fifth session revisited the matter of St. Cyril and Memnon of Ephesus, once again requesting John of Antioch's attendance. His continued refusal prompted the council to make a solemn decision, declaring John of Antioch excommunicated and no longer in communion with the Christian church at large. This resolution required the emperor's endorsement, and a letter was dispatched to him seeking his approval.

6th Session:

Five days later, the council convened for the sixth session, presided over by St. Cyril. After scrutinizing doctrinal teachings, the council reaffirmed its adherence to the Creed of Nicea and Constantinople. They denounced any alteration, either by addition or omission, of words from the Creed, issuing an anathema against those who deviated from its original form.

7th Session:

The final session, the seventh, was held the following day and focused on resolving an administrative issue related to the church of Cyprus. The council granted independence to the church of Cyprus, ensuring its autonomy. Additionally, six canons were established, addressing matters of discipline within the church.

The Canons

The resulting canons outlined the proper responses to doctrinal deviations and the authority of bishops and clergy, establishing clear guidelines for handling heresies and maintaining ecclesiastical order. The canons reflect the council's efforts to defend the integrity of Christological doctrine and enforce ecclesiastical discipline, aiming to preserve church unity and orthodoxy amidst widespread controversy.

Canon	Summary
1	Any Metropolitan who joined or joins apostates, or accepts heretical doctrines (e.g., Celestius), loses all ecclesiastical authority and is subject to local orthodox bishops.
2	Provincial bishops absent from the Synod who joined apostates, or supported Nestorius after rejecting him, are to be deposed from the priesthood.

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- 3 Clergy banned by Nestorius for their orthodoxy are to be restored. Orthodox clergy must not submit to apostate bishops.
 - 4 Clergy who support the doctrines of Nestorius or Celestius are to be deposed.
 - 5 Anyone restored to their rank by Nestorius, after being condemned, remains deposed; Nestorius' actions to restore them are invalid.
 - 6 Those attempting to oppose Synod decisions shall lose their office if clergy, and be excommunicated if laypersons.
 - 7 No new or altered faith statements are allowed. Those who create or teach heretical doctrines (like Nestorius' doctrines) will be deposed if clergy, and anathematized if laypersons.
 - 8 The Synod reaffirms the independence of Cyprus and other provinces to ordain their own bishops without external interference, following ancient custom. Violations against this rule are invalid.

One Nature of Christ

The one nature of Christ is a fundamental tenet of Orthodoxy, and it is not open to dispute. The Gospel of John explicitly states that "the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14), emphasizing that Jesus Christ possessed both human and divine aspects. This profound mystery of godliness is further affirmed in the First Epistle of Timothy, which declares, "great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (1 Timothy 3:16).

Despite the challenges posed by various heresies, such as those propagated by Nestorius, the Church has remained steadfast in its faith in the one nature of Christ. The words of the archangel Gabriel to St. Mary, as recorded in the Gospel of Luke, provide a powerful affirmation of this truth: "for you have found favor with God...therefore also the Holy One which shall be born of you shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:30-35).

This passage underscores the miraculous conception of Jesus Christ and His unique identity as both the Son of God and the Son of Man. The union of His human and divine natures in one person is essential to understanding the significance of His life, ministry, death, and resurrection. Through His humanity, Jesus was able to fully experience the human condition, including suffering and temptation. Yet, He remained sinless and consistently demonstrated His divine power and authority.⁴

The one nature of Christ is crucial for our salvation. His sacrificial death on the cross, as the perfect and sinless Lamb of God, provided the necessary atonement for the sins of humanity. By His resurrection, He conquered death and secured eternal life for all who believe in Him.

Throughout history, the Church has consistently upheld the doctrine of the one nature of Christ against various heretical teachings. This unwavering commitment to the truth has been instrumental in preserving the integrity of the Christian faith and ensuring that future generations of believers can continue to experience the transformative power of knowing and following Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God.



Review Questions

1. Nestorius created two heresies.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
2. One such heresy claimed Christ had one nature and his humanity was not real.
 - a. True
 - b. **False**
3. Who refuted Nestorius' heresy?
 - a. **Cyril of Alexandria**
 - b. Athanasius of Alexandria
 - c. John Chrysostom
 - d. Gregory of Nazianzus
4. How many sessions did the Council of Ephesus convene for?
 - a. 1
 - b. 3
 - c. **7**
 - d. 8
5. Cite a verse regarding Christ's singular nature. (A: John 1:14)
6. How many canons were instated during the Council of Ephesus?
 - a. 6
 - b. **8**
 - c. 7
 - d. 9



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Council of Chalcedon

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Christianity in the 5th Century

As Christianity grew through the first few centuries, five apostolic Sees led the way: Alexandria, Jerusalem, Antioch, Rome, and Constantinople. These Sees were important centers of Christianity and played a significant role in the development of Christian thought and practice.

Likewise, the Roman Empire had two capitals: the western capital of Rome and the eastern capital of Constantinople. Rome was the traditional capital of the Roman Empire, while Constantinople was founded by Emperor Constantine I in 330 AD as a new capital for the eastern part of the empire.

All had one faith was confirmed by the three councils against many heresies. These ecumenical councils were gatherings of bishops and other church leaders who met to discuss and resolve theological disputes. The three councils were:

- Nicea 325 AD: This council condemned the heresy of Arius, who taught that the Son of God was not equal to the Father. The council affirmed the Nicene Creed, which declared that the Son is "begotten, not made" and is "of one substance with the Father."
- Constantinople 381 AD: This council condemned the heresies of Macedonius, who denied that the Holy Spirit is God, and Apollinarius, who taught that Christ was more Divine than human. The council affirmed the Nicene Creed and declared that the Holy Spirit is "co-eternal and co-equal with the Father and the Son."
- Ephesus 431 AD: This council condemned the heresy of Nestorius, who taught that the two natures of Christ, divine and human, are separate. The council affirmed that Christ is one person with two natures and declared that St. Mary is the Mother of God, not just the Mother of Christ.

These three councils were instrumental in shaping the Orthodox Christian faith and in condemning various heretical teachings that threatened the unity of the church.

Events Leading Up to Chalcedon

The Church of Alexandria played a pivotal role in the early Ecumenical Councils, leaving an enduring mark on Christian history. St. Athanasius of Alexandria staunchly defended the doctrine of the Trinity at the Council of Nicea in 325 AD. His unwavering stance against Arianism, which threatened to divide the Church, earned him the title "Father of Orthodoxy."

Another influential Alexandrian bishop was Pope Timothy I presided over the Second Ecumenical Council in Constantinople in 381 AD. This council condemned the heresy of Apollinarianism, which denied the full humanity of Christ. Pope Timothy's leadership was instrumental in reaffirming the orthodox teaching on the dual nature of Christ, both divine and human.

The Church of Alexandria's prominence continued with St. Cyril of Alexandria, who presided over the Third Ecumenical Council in Ephesus in 431 AD. This council dealt with the Nestorian heresy, which separated the divine and human natures of Christ. Pope Cyril championed the concept of the hypostatic union, asserting that Christ was one nature out of two natures, divine and human. His efforts were crucial in preserving the unity of the Church and upholding the orthodox understanding of Christology.

Beyond the Ecumenical Councils, Alexandria housed the renowned School of Theology, attracting scholars and students from far and wide. This institution became a hub of theological inquiry and learning, producing some of the most influential theologians in Christian history, such as Origen, Clement of Alexandria, and Didymus the Blind. The Alexandrian School's focus on exegesis, philosophy, and apologetics shaped Christian thought and contributed significantly to the development of early Christian theology.

The intellectual prowess and leadership of the Alexandrian Archbishops earned them great respect and authority. They were often consulted on matters of faith and doctrine by other Christian communities and presided councils for this reason. Their ability to convene and preside over councils further solidified Alexandria's position as a prominent center of Christianity. However, this prominence also aroused envy and strife from other Sees, leading to occasional tensions and rivalries.

The Heresy of Eutyches

About two years after St. Cyril of Alexandria's death in 444AD, in combating this assertion of Patriarch Nestorius, the teachings of Eutyches took wind. Eutyches, an influential abbot of a prominent monastery in Constantinople, gained notoriety for his unorthodox beliefs regarding the nature of Christ. He steadfastly maintained that the human nature was absorbed and dissolved in the Divine nature as a drop of vinegar in the ocean. In this way, he denied the human nature of Christ.

This theological stance, known as Monophysitism, deviated significantly from the widely accepted teachings of the Church, which emphasized the dual nature of Christ, both divine and human.

In response to the growing influence of Eutyches and his followers, Flavianus, the bishop of Constantinople, convened a local council in Ephesus in the year 448 AD. The council, attended by prominent theologians and church officials, thoroughly examined Eutyches' beliefs and ultimately reached a decision. After careful deliberation, the council excommunicated Eutyches from the Church, declaring his teachings to be heretical and incompatible with orthodox Christian doctrine.

However, Eutyches felt deeply aggrieved by the council's decision. He believed that he had not been given a fair opportunity to present his case and defend his beliefs adequately. He maintained that the excommunication was unjust and that he had not been granted a proper platform to engage in a meaningful debate before such a drastic measure was taken against him. In an attempt to rectify the situation and seek redress, Eutyches composed a series of letters. These letters were addressed to influential figures within the Church hierarchy, including Pope Leo I of Rome. In these communications, Eutyches passionately defended his theological positions, arguing that they were based on sound scriptural interpretation and were in alignment with the teachings of the early Church Fathers. He implored the recipients of his letters to reconsider the council's decision and to grant him a fair hearing.

Eutyches' letters shed light on his unwavering commitment to his beliefs and his deep sense of injustice at being excommunicated without due process. They also provide valuable insights into the theological debates and controversies of the early Christian Church, particularly regarding the nature of Christ and the relationship between the divine and human elements within him.

The 2nd Council of Ephesus [Ephesus II of 449AD]

In the year 449 AD, news reached Emperor Theodosius II, a ruler who held the church of Alexandria in high regard and devotion. The Emperor, seeking to resolve a theological dispute, entrusted Pope Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, with the responsibility of overseeing a second council in Ephesus to hear the case of Eutyches, a monk who had been accused of heresy.

The second local council of Ephesus convened with Pope Dioscorus presiding as the president. The local council of Ephesus II (449AD) granted Eutyches an opportunity to repent and renounce his alleged heretical beliefs. Eutyches, under pressure from the council, submitted a written statement in which he acknowledged his errors and reaffirmed his adherence to the true faith.

The council, convinced by Eutyches' apparent repentance, readmitted him into the ranks of the clergy. However, in a controversial move, they also took punitive action against Pope Flavian of Constantinople and several other bishops who had supported him. The council accused Pope Flavian and his allies of political scheming and deposed them from their positions.

The events of the second council of Ephesus highlight the complex interplay between religious and political power in the Byzantine Empire. The Emperor's involvement in ecclesiastical matters underscores the extent to which the state and the church were intertwined. The council's actions against Pope Flavian and his supporters demonstrate the readiness of the church to use its authority to silence dissenting voices and consolidate its power.

The council's decision to reinstate Eutyches and depose Pope Flavian sparked outrage among many Christians, who believed that Eutyches' heretical views had not been adequately addressed. This controversy laid the foundation for further disputes and divisions within the church, contributing to the turbulent religious landscape of the Byzantine Empire in the years that followed.

Pope Leo I of Rome

In the year 449 AD, when the 2nd Council of Ephesus convened, Pope Leo the Great, the Bishop of Rome, did not attend personally. Instead, he dispatched delegates carrying his renowned document, known as 'The Tome of Leo.' The document was written in Latin, despite the fact that Greek was the predominant language of the Eastern Church.

Shortly after the council, Emperor Theodosius II, who had initially denied Pope Leo's request for another council, passed away. His sister, Pulcheria, succeeded him as Empress. Recognizing the opportunity, Pope Leo traveled to Constantinople to congratulate Pulcheria and to present his case regarding the Tome of Leo and the position of the Church of Rome. Pope Leo argued that the Church of Rome, as the apostolic see founded by Saint Peter, held a unique and elevated position among the Christian churches. He emphasized the importance of unity and orthodoxy in matters of faith and doctrine.

Pulcheria, convinced by Pope Leo's arguments, agreed to convene a new council to replace the previous two Eutychian councils. Pope Leo had previously attempted to persuade Emperor Theodosius to call for such a council, but his request had been denied. However, with Pulcheria's support, the path was now clear for a new council to address the theological controversies that had plagued the Church.

Chalcedon – 451 AD

In the midst of a significant gathering, several notable absences marked the Council of Chalcedon – first, that of Pope Leo. Rather than attending in person, he chose to send delegates to represent him, accompanied by a significant document known as the Tome. This Tome held great importance, carrying within its pages profound theological concepts that would shape the course of Christian history.

Many historians hold the belief that this council was not convened with the intention of introducing new doctrines or teachings into the Christian faith. Instead, it is widely regarded as a strategic maneuver orchestrated to ensnare Pope Dioscorus, who had taken a controversial stance during the previous council. Over 520 bishops were given a seat at the council, Pope Dioscorus was not. Emperor Marcian summoned Dioscorus to answer for his actions of Ephesus II and to discuss his views on Christology at Chalcedon in 451 A.D. The Romans quickly mustered a massive army of bishops from the West to join the East European prelates at Chalcedon in Asia Minor, while Dioscorus was detained by the imperial guard under a kind of house arrest, and the Council summarily condemned and exiled him to the island of Gangra in Paphlagonia near the southern shores of the Black Sea where he died a few years later.

The Tome, a document carefully crafted in Latin, was presented to Pope Dioscorus for his perusal. However, he perceived the Tome as promoting a Nestorian ideology, which posited that Christ possessed two distinct and separate natures – human and divine. This interpretation led Pope Dioscorus to declare Pope Leo excommunicated, an act that provoked strong opposition from the rest of the council.

The Council of Chalcedon became a stage for a dramatic confrontation between the Egyptian contingent and the rest of the attendees. The Egyptians found themselves isolated and outnumbered, as the majority of the council vehemently opposed their stance. This opposition ultimately led to the reaffirmation of Pope Leo's position and the condemnation of Nestorianism as heretical.

Pope Dioscorus

In a bold move to assert her authority, Empress Theodora exiled Pope Dioscorus, the reigning patriarch of Alexandria. This decision was met with mixed reactions, further dividing the church in Alexandria. The empress, determined to maintain her control over religious matters, swiftly appointed a new patriarch for Alexandria. This move caused a slight schism within the church, as the new See established by the empress, known as the Melkites, continued to exist even to this day. The term

"Melkites," which translates to "of the king," signifies the patriarch's appointment by the palace, highlighting the empress's influence over religious affairs. In response to the empress's actions, the Church of Alexandria, unwavering in its autonomy, appointed their archbishop, Timothy II, as the legitimate patriarch. This act of defiance further solidified the split between the two factions within the church of Alexandria. The appointment of Timothy II reinforced the church's commitment to its own authority and its refusal to yield to imperial pressure. The schism that ensued from these events left a lasting impact on the unity of the church in Alexandria, creating two distinct branches that operated independently from one another.

Chalcedon vs Non-Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon split the Christians into two groups. From that day on, we were incorrectly labeled as Eutychians, or Monophysites. We comprise the Oriental Orthodox Churches, and our current sister churches are the Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Armenian Orthodox Church, the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church, (Indian Orthodox Church), the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church, and finally, the Eritrean Orthodox Church.

The Council of Chalcedon, convened in 451 AD, was a pivotal moment in the history of Christianity. It sought to address the theological dispute surrounding the nature of Christ, specifically, whether He possessed one or two natures. The council's declaration, known as the Chalcedonian Creed, affirmed the dual nature of Christ, both human and divine, in one person.

However, a significant number of Christians, including many in the Eastern regions of the Roman Empire, rejected the Chalcedonian Creed. They argued that Christ had only one nature out of two, divine and human nature. These Christians became known as Miaphysites. The rejection of the Chalcedonian Creed by the Miaphysites led to a division within Christianity. The ōn-Chalcedonian churches, also known today as the Oriental Orthodox Churches, maintained their theological convictions and separated from the Chalcedonian churches. The Oriental Orthodox Churches include:

1. The Coptic Orthodox Church: Traces its roots back to the earliest days of Christianity, with a lineage that extends to the evangelization of Egypt by Saint Mark the Apostle in the 1st century AD. The term "Coptic" derives from the Greek word "Aigypptos," meaning Egypt, signifying the church's deep connection to the land and its people.
2. The Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch: Rooted in the ancient patriarchate of Antioch, this church has a rich heritage of Syriac Christianity and is primarily present in Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, and the Middle East.
3. The Armenian Orthodox Church: An ancient and independent church, the Armenian Orthodox Church is rooted in the Armenian Apostolic Tradition and is primarily present in Armenia, Georgia, and the Middle East.
4. The Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church (Indian Orthodox Church): Based in India, this

church traces its origins to Saint Thomas the Apostle and has a strong presence in Kerala and other parts of India.

5. The Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church: One of the oldest Christian churches in the world, with roots dating back to the 1st century AD, the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church is the largest Oriental Orthodox Church and is primarily present in Ethiopia, Eritrea, and the Middle East.
6. The Eritrean Orthodox Church: A relatively new church, the Eritrean Orthodox Church became independent in 1993 when it split from the Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church. It is primarily present in Eritrea and the Middle East.

These churches collectively form the Oriental Orthodox communion, also known as the Miaphysite communion, and have maintained their unique theological perspective on the nature of Christ while preserving their own distinctive traditions and liturgies.

What Happened?

During these early centuries of Christianity, a significant struggle for power emerged, characterized by unlawful political influence on religious matters. Pride played a detrimental role, affecting both Christian and non-Christian individuals. One of the prominent barriers experienced during this conflict was the difference in language between the parties involved, making communication and understanding challenging.

Looking back at the 20th century, the split within the church became evident. However, despite these divisions, churches have affirmed that there is a shared belief in the core tenets of faith. However, the political and social differences that have arisen will require careful consideration and resolution.

Miaphysites hold a unique belief regarding the nature of Christ. The belief that Christ possesses a single nature, which is of both Divine and Human aspects, merged into one indivisible entity. This understanding of Christ's nature differs from other Christian denominations and contributes to the ongoing theological discussions. The Eastern church speak of two nature united in one hypostasis.

The complexities of the conflict extend beyond theological disagreements. The unlawful political influence on religion resulted in a power struggle, where individuals and institutions sought to gain control and dominance. This interference distorted the purity of faith and hindered the true spiritual growth of believers.

Takeaways for Service

This lesson warns of the dangers of pride and self-seeking, however our Lord is merciful and strives to bring back the lost sheep of the Church. We must put Christ before politics time and again. There will always be a need for Biblical conflict resolution: “moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17) Our God is merciful and we must honor Him, as well as interpret His Word corrected to live a pious life: “so then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20)

This serves as a cautionary reminder of the perils associated with pride and self-seeking services. It emphasizes the merciful nature of our Lord, who strives to bring back the lost sheep of the Church. It stresses the importance of prioritizing Christ over political matters, recognizing that conflicts will inevitably arise.

The passage from Matthew 18:15-17 provides a framework for resolving conflicts within the Church. It advocates for direct communication with the offending brother, seeking resolution privately. There will always be a need for Biblical conflict resolution: “moreover if your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault between you and him alone. If he hears you, you have gained your brother. But if he will not hear, take with you one or two more, that ‘by the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.’ And if he refuses to hear them, tell it to the church. But if he refuses even to hear the church, let him be to you like a heathen and a tax collector.” (Matthew 18:15-17)

Our God is merciful and we must honor Him, as well as interpret His Word corrected to live a pious life: “so then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath; for the wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God.” (James 1:19-20) These passages highlight the importance of God's mercy and the responsibility of believers to honor Him by interpreting His Word correctly. It encourages individuals to be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger, recognizing that human anger does not align with the righteousness of God.



Review Questions

1. What language was the Tome written in?

- a. English
 - b. Latin**
 - c. Greek
 - d. Aramaic
2. Who was not present at Chalcedon in 451 AD?
 - a. Pope Leo I**
 - b. Emperor Marcian
 - c. Saint Cyril of Alexandria
 - d. Saint Augustine of Hippo
3. Who were two people, from the Church of Alexandria, who played a great role in the events leading up to Chalcedon?
 - a. Cyril and Dioscorus
 - b. Athanasius and Pope Timothy I**
 - c. Nestorius and Eutyches
 - d. John Chrysostom and Theodore of Mopsuestia
4. Who did the Empress exile?
 - a. Pope Leo
 - b. Pope Athanasius
 - c. Pope Dioscorus**
 - d. Pope Timothy
5. What is a takeaway from this lesson? (A: Be careful of the dangers of pride.)



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Heresies of The Early Church

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

What is a heresy?

The word "heresy" has a rich and complex history, rooted in the ancient Greek language. Derived from the Greek word "αἵρεσις" ("hairesis"), a feminine noun stemming from the verb "hairéomai," it initially conveyed the sense of "personally selecting or choosing." This fundamental meaning implied the act of making a conscious and decisive choice based on individual preference or judgment.

In its early usage within the Greek context, "hairesis" was employed to describe a wide range of situations involving the act of choosing. This could include joining a philosophical school, or adopting a particular way of life. In this sense, "hairesis" did not carry any inherently negative connotations; rather, it simply denoted the process of making a deliberate choice.

In early Christian communities, as various churches gathered to deliberate on matters of faith and doctrine, differing opinions inevitably emerged. These deviations from the prevailing consensus were commonly labeled as "heresies." Initially, this term simply denoted an alternative viewpoint or opinion held by a particular group or individual. However, as Christianity spread and solidified its institutional structures, the concept of heresy evolved to encompass more profound theological implications.

Consequently, the labeling of certain beliefs or practices as "heretical" became a powerful tool for defining and policing the boundaries of Christian orthodoxy. Heretical ideas were seen as defying the integrity of the faith and undermining the authority of the established church. As a result, individuals and groups deemed heretical were often subjected to ostracism, persecution, and even excommunication.

According to Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, heresy came to be understood as "adherence to a religious opinion contrary to church dogma." This definition reflects the growing significance of orthodoxy and the establishment of standardized beliefs within the Christian church.

Opinions that diverged from the officially sanctioned doctrines were deemed heretical, challenging the unity and authority of the church.

What does the Bible say about Heresies?

Throughout human history, mankind's innate tendency to form opinions and beliefs has often resulted in the unsettling phenomenon of heresies. These distortions of religious doctrines have a long and tumultuous past, dating back to the dawn of written scriptures. Even during the time of the apostles, the original followers of Jesus Christ, heresies emerged and posed a significant threat.

The apostles, being eyewitnesses to the life and teachings of Jesus, understood the importance of maintaining the purity of the gospel message. They recognized that any deviation from the truth could lead to confusion, division, and spiritual harm. As a result, they actively confronted and warned against the spread of false teachings.

But why would such seemingly minor deviations in belief or seemingly trivial details warrant such severe responses? St. Peter provides a clear answer in his second letter: *false teachers would emerge, secretly introducing destructive heresies that would deny the Lord and lead many astray. "But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction. And many will follow their destructive ways, because of whom the way of truth will be blasphemed. By covetousness they will exploit you with deceptive words; for a long time their judgment has not been idle, and their destruction does not slumber."* (2 Peter 2:1) These false teachers could appear with seemingly minor deviations in belief or seemingly trivial details, but their teachings would have severe consequences. The presence of false teachers would cause division within the church as believers would be torn between the truth and the lies being propagated by these deceivers. Furthermore, the way of truth would be blasphemed as those outside the church would use the false teachings of these teachers to discredit Christianity.

Moreover, St. Peter clarifies that oftentimes these false teachers exploit others through covetousness and deceptive words, with their judgment looming over them like a sword hanging by a thread. Heresies have the insidious ability to divide communities and undermine the unity that is essential for any group to thrive. As our Lord proclaimed, "no kingdom divided against itself can stand." Therefore, it is imperative to address heresies swiftly and decisively. Heresies challenge the established beliefs and values that provide a common ground for church members. When these foundations are shaken, confusion and uncertainty prevail, eroding the sense of purpose and direction.

St. Titus echoes this sentiment, urging believers to reject divisive individuals after repeated admonitions. He recognizes that such individuals are warped and sinning, condemning themselves through their actions. “Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned.” (Titus 3:10-11) The approach to heresies, then, must be unwavering and uncompromising. The goal is not to persecute individuals but to safeguard the integrity of the faith and protect the community from harm. This firm stance is necessary to preserve the unity and truth that form the foundation of any religious community. The goal is to preserve the unity and truth that form the foundation of the church. By rejecting divisive individuals, the church can maintain its focus on the teachings of Jesus Christ and continue to grow in love and fellowship.

Type of Christian Heresies in the Early Church

When it comes to heresies, these dogmatically different opinions that must be corrected, those referring to God is of greatest importance. When speaking to the Samaritan woman, the Lord clarifies the importance of true worship: “You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.” (John 4:22-24) Accordingly, when it comes to the character and person of God, many heresies have been critical to correct such that we worship in spirit and truth, worshiping that which we know. Without this unity in dogma can we truly say we know Him if we all have different definitions of who He is? Let us then visit the heresies of God through four different sections. Heresies on God the Trinity, heresies on the Father, heresies on the Son and heresies on the Holy Spirit.

1. Against the God the Trinity (Existence and Hypostasis)

When looking at heresies on the Trinity, there are a few different way the TRinity is attacked. From one perspective, the objections may come with regards to his existence, such as atheists and agnostics. Alternatively, other objections come with regards to the hypostasis of God, whether he is 1 person, changing or unchanging or how each person of the Trinity interacted. Let us review each in more detail.

Throughout history, this doctrine has been a focal point of theological debate, giving rise to a myriad of heresies and objections. These challenges to the orthodox understanding of the Trinity can

be broadly categorized into two main areas: those that question the very existence of God and those that grapple with the nature of God's triune being.

Challenges to the Existence of God

This category encompasses objections raised by atheists and agnostics. Atheists fundamentally deny the existence of any divine being, including the Triune God of Christianity. Agnostics, on the other hand, maintain a position of uncertainty, asserting that the existence of God is unknowable.

- **Atheism:** Atheism is a belief system that rejects the existence of any gods or supernatural beings. Atheists argue that there is no evidence to support the existence of deities and that the concept of god is a human invention. Atheism can be contrasted with theism, which is the belief in the existence of one or more gods.
- **Agnosticism:** Agnosticism is the view that the existence or non-existence of any gods or supernatural beings cannot be known or proven. Agnostics argue that there is not enough evidence to support either the existence or non-existence of deities and that it is therefore impossible to make a definitive statement about their existence. Agnosticism can be contrasted with gnosticism, which is the belief that certain knowledge about the existence of deities or supernatural beings is possible.

Challenges to the Nature of the Triune God

This category encompasses a wide range of heresies that have arisen throughout Church history. These heresies primarily focus on the concept of God's "hypostasis," a Greek term referring to the distinct persons within the Godhead.

- **Monarchianism:** Monarchianism is a theological movement that emphasizes God as one indivisible being.
 - a. **Adoptionist | Unitarianism:** These monarchians believe that there is only one God and that Jesus Christ is not divine but rather a created being.
 - b. **Modalism | Sabellianism:** This heresy proposes that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not distinct persons but rather different modes or manifestations of a single divine person. Modalism essentially denies the plurality of persons within the Trinity.
- **Tritheism:** This heresy, in contrast to Modalism, goes to the opposite extreme by asserting that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate and distinct gods. Tritheism compromises the essential unity of the Godhead.
- **Subordinationism:** This heresy, while acknowledging the plurality of persons within the Trinity, maintains a hierarchy among them. Subordinationists typically view the Son and the Holy Spirit as subordinate to the Father in terms of their being or authority. This view challenges the co-equality of the persons within the Trinity.
- **Marcionism/Dualistic:** Marcionism is a theological movement that teaches that the God of the Old Testament is different from the God of the New Testament. Marcionites argue that the God of the Old Testament is a wrathful and vengeful deity, while the God of the New Testament is a

loving and merciful deity. Marcionism can be contrasted with Trinitarianism, which teaches that there is only one God who is both wrathful and merciful.

The Orthodox Response

Throughout the centuries, the Church has responded to these challenges by formulating and refining its understanding of the Trinity. The orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, as affirmed by the major Christian creeds, upholds the following key tenets:

- **Monotheism:** There is only one God.
- **Trinity:** This one God exists in three distinct persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- **Equality:** These three persons are co-equal and co-eternal.
- **Distinctness:** Each person possesses a unique role and function within the Godhead.
- **Unity:** The three persons are inseparably united in essence and will.

Some early Christian thinkers wrestled with how to reconcile the belief in one God with the distinct roles and identities of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit as revealed in Scripture. The development of Trinitarian doctrine was a dynamic process, marked by intense debate and theological reflection. Church councils, such as the Council of Nicaea, the Council of Constantinople and the Council of Ephesus, played a crucial role in formulating the orthodox understanding of the Trinity, which has been passed down through the centuries.

While engaging with these historical challenges can be intellectually stimulating, it's crucial to remember that the doctrine of the Trinity is not merely an abstract theological concept. It lies at the heart of Christian faith and shapes our understanding of God's nature and his relationship with humanity.

2. Against the Father (Suffering)

Patricianism, a controversial theological doctrine that emerged in the 2nd century AD, challenges the traditional Christian understanding of the Trinity. Unlike mainstream Christianity, which distinguishes between the Father, Son (Jesus Christ), and Holy Spirit as distinct persons within the Godhead, Patricianism asserts that God the Father, not just God the Son, suffered and died on the cross during the Passion.

The origins of Patricianism can be traced back to early Christian thinkers such as Sabellius, Noetus of Smyrna, and Praxeas. These theologians argued that God is a singular being who manifested himself in different ways at different times. According to Patricianism, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are not separate entities but rather different modes or aspects of the one true God.

One of the central tenets of Patripassianism is the belief that the Father, who is traditionally understood as transcendent and immutable, actively participated in the suffering and death of Christ on the cross. This notion contradicts the orthodox Christian view that the Father remained impassible and unaffected by the events of the Passion. Patripassians argued that the Father's love and compassion for humanity compelled him to enter into the human experience fully, including enduring the pain and suffering associated with crucifixion.

Patripassianism also challenges the traditional understanding of the relationship between the Father and the Son. In Christianity, the Father is seen as distinct from the Son, with the Son acting as the mediator between God and humanity. However, Patripassians contend that the Father and the Son are inseparable and that it was the Father himself who became incarnate in Jesus Christ. They emphasize that the Father did not merely send his Son to suffer and die but that he actively participated in the redemptive act of the cross.

Patripassianism gained some followers in the early Church, but it was ultimately condemned as heretical by the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. The Council established the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, which affirms that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are distinct persons within the one God. This doctrine emphasizes the unity and diversity of God's nature while preserving the distinct roles of each person in the Godhead.

In modern times, Patripassianism has found renewed interest among certain theological movements that emphasize the unity and simplicity of God. These movements, such as "Oneness Pentecostalism" and "Modalist Monarchianism," argue that the traditional Trinitarian understanding is too complex and contradictory. History repeats itself.

3. Against the Son

A large majority of heresies in the early church were directed against the Son. Some heresies attacked the hypostasis, others His divinity, while some argued against his Humanity and finally others compromised His nature. Let's delve deeper into the complex landscape of early church heresies, focusing on those that challenged the understanding of the Son, Jesus Christ. These heresies were not merely abstract theological debates; they struck at the very heart of Christian identity and salvation.

Heresies Against the Hypostasis of the Son

- **Ehionism | Adoptionism:** Adoptionists proposed that Jesus was a mere human who was "adopted" by God as his Son at his baptism or resurrection. This view diminished the unique divine nature of Jesus, reducing him to a status of exceptional, but ultimately created, being.

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- **Manicheanism:** Manicheanism, a religious and philosophical system founded by the Persian prophet Mani in the 3rd century CE, shares similarities with Ebionism. It teaches that the universe is divided into two opposing realms: the realm of light, associated with good and God, and the realm of darkness, associated with evil and matter. According to Manicheanism, Jesus Christ was a manifestation of the divine light who came to earth to liberate humanity from the forces of darkness. The Paulicians, a Christian sect that emerged in the 7th century CE in the Byzantine Empire, adopted many Manichean beliefs, including the view that Jesus was a created being and not eternally divine. Both Manicheanism and Paulicianism were considered heretical by the established Christian Church and faced persecution throughout their existence.

Heresies Against the Divinity of the Son

- **Arianism:** Arguably the most influential of the early heresies, Arianism asserted that Jesus was created by God the Father and was therefore subordinate to him. Arius, the proponent of this view, famously declared, "There was a time when he was not." This directly contradicted the orthodox Christian understanding of Jesus as co-eternal and co-equal with the Father.
- **Semi-Arianism:** Semi-Arians attempt to find a middle ground between Arianism and Trinitarianism. They suggest that the Son is similar or like the Father (homoiousian) rather than being of the same substance (homoousian), as the Nicene Creed affirms. Some Semi-Arians argue that the Son is a created being, but that he is the first and highest creation of God.
- **Anomoeanism:** Anomoeanism represents an extreme form of Arianism, asserting that the Son is entirely different and unlike the Father (anomoios). Anomoeans deny any inherent similarity or likeness between God the Father and Jesus Christ. They argue that Jesus is not divine in the same sense as the Father and that the idea of the Trinity is false.
- **Subordinationism:** While not as extreme as Arianism, subordinationism maintained a hierarchy within the Trinity, placing the Son in a subordinate position to the Father. This view undermined the concept of the Trinity as three co-equal and co-eternal persons.

Heresies Against the Humanity of the Son

- **Apollinarianism:** Apollinaris of Laodicea proposed that Jesus had a human body but a divine mind or soul. Apollinaris argued that the divine Logos took the place of the human soul in Jesus Christ, and that therefore Jesus Christ did not have a complete human nature. This view was condemned as heresy by the Council of Constantinople in 381, and Apollinarianism was subsequently suppressed by the Byzantine Empire. This view was seen as compromising the full humanity of Jesus, which was essential for his role as a savior and representative of humankind.
- **Gnosticism | Marcionism | Valentianism:** A diverse set of religious movements that flourished in the early centuries of Christianity, Gnosticism held a variety of beliefs, but all shared the common belief that there is a profound distinction between the material world and the spiritual world. Both Marcionism and Valentinianism shared a common Gnostic thread in their emphasis on secret knowledge as the key to salvation. They also both expressed a certain dissatisfaction with the material world, viewing it as flawed or even evil, accordingly denying Christ's physical incarnation. They believed that matter was inherently evil, and therefore, a divine being could not have truly taken on a material form.

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- **Docetism:** This early heresy questioned the true humanity of Jesus, suggesting that his physical body was an illusion. Docetists believed that matter was inherently evil, and therefore, a divine being like Jesus could not have taken on a true human form. This challenged the core Christian belief in the Incarnation, the belief that God became flesh in the person of Jesus Christ.

Heresies Compromising the Nature of the Son

- **Eutychianism:** This heresy, also known as Monophysitism, asserted that Jesus had only one nature, a divine nature that absorbed his human nature. This was seen as a threat to the understanding of Jesus as fully human and fully divine.
- **Nestorianism:** Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, emphasized the distinction between the human and divine natures of Jesus to the point of suggesting two separate persons. This view was condemned as dividing the person of Christ.
- **Pelagianism:** Though not a direct heresy on the Nature of God, the heresy undermined the work of God in salvation and diminished salvation through grace. Pelagianism is a Christian theological doctrine that emphasizes the role of human free will in salvation. It was developed by Pelagius, a British monk, in the 5th century. Pelagius argued that humans are born with the ability to choose between good and evil, and that they do not need the grace of God to be saved. This view was condemned as heresy by the Council of Carthage in 418, and Pelagianism was subsequently suppressed by the Byzantine Empire.

4. Against the Holy Spirit

Heresies did not spare the Holy Spirit. Just as the Father and the Son were vehemently attacked, the Holy Spirit too was subject to a variety of heresies throughout Church history. These heresies often stemmed from misunderstandings or deliberate misrepresentations of the Holy Spirit's nature, role, and relationship within the Trinity. Let's delve deeper into some of these heresies.

- **Macedonianism | Pneumatomachi:** This heresy, named after its proponent Macedonius, Bishop of Constantinople in the 4th century, denied the full divinity of the Holy Spirit. The term "Pneumatomachi" literally means "fighters against the Spirit." Macedonians argued that the Holy Spirit was a created being, subordinate to the Father and the Son. The Macedonianists based their arguments on various scriptural interpretations and theological speculations. They pointed to passages in the Bible that seemed to suggest that the Holy Spirit was not on the same level as the Father and the Son. For example, they emphasized verses that described the Spirit as being "sent" by the Father or the Son, implying a hierarchical relationship. The Macedonianists' teachings sparked intense theological debates and controversies within the early church. Their views were vehemently opposed by many prominent church leaders, including Basil the Great and Gregory of Nyssa. These theologians argued that the denial of the Holy Spirit's divinity diminished the Spirit's role in the salvation and sanctification of believers. This contradicted the orthodox Christian understanding of the Trinity, which affirms the equal divinity and co-eternality of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Macedonianists were condemned as heretics by the First Council of Constantinople in 381 AD.
- **Montanism:** While not solely focused on the Holy Spirit, Montanism, a 2nd-century

movement, emphasized the continuing revelation of the Holy Spirit through prophets and prophetesses. They also believed that the Spirit could empower believers to live a life of holiness and power. Montanus, the founder of the movement, claimed to be a mouthpiece for the Holy Spirit, delivering new prophecies and teachings. This challenged the authority of the established Church and its understanding of the completion of revelation in Jesus Christ.

- **Filioque:** The Filioque controversy centered on the question of whether the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone or from both the Father and the Son. The Western church held that the Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, while the Eastern church held that the Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. At the heart of the controversy was the interpretation of a passage in the Gospel of John (15:26), where Jesus speaks of the Holy Spirit as being sent by both the Father and himself. The Western church, particularly the Latin-speaking theologians, interpreted this passage as evidence that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son. This view, known as the "Filioque" (Latin for "and the Son"), became widely accepted in the West. On the other hand, the Eastern church, primarily represented by Greek-speaking theologians, held a different understanding. They argued that the Holy Spirit proceeds solely from the Father and that any addition to the Nicene Creed, which defined the core beliefs of Christianity, was unacceptable. They believed that the Western interpretation undermined the Father's unique role as the source of divinity and compromised the unity of the Trinity. This difference in belief led to a schism between the Eastern and Western churches in the 11th century. The issue has never been fully resolved, and it remains a point of contention between the two branches of Christianity.
- **Donatism:** Donatism was a movement in early Christianity that emphasized the importance of holiness in the clergy. Donatists believed that Christian clergy must be faultless for their ministry to be effective and their prayers and sacraments to be valid. They rejected the idea that the church could tolerate sinful clergy, and they argued that the church should be purified of all unrighteousness. Donatism was condemned as heretical by the early church, but it continued to exist as a separate movement for several centuries.

The Church's response to these heresies was crucial in shaping and solidifying Christian doctrine regarding the Holy Spirit. Through councils and the writings of theologians, the Church affirmed the full divinity, personality, and co-equality of the Holy Spirit with the Father and the Son. The Nicene Creed, formulated in the 4th century, explicitly states that the Holy Spirit is "the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified."

Taking the time to ponder

Why is dogma important to learn and preserve? Take the time to ponder on the question. The dogmas of a church are those doctrines which it declares to be the most essential contents of Christianity. Was fighting all these heresies necessary? Where would the church be today should all have these heresies been individually considered minor? Dogma is a form of the abiding vitality of the deposit of faith in the church which itself remains always the same.

Dogmas serve as the guiding principles and benchmarks for the church's understanding and interpretation of Scripture, tradition, and theological reflection. They provide a framework for comprehending the mysteries of faith and articulating them in a coherent and consistent manner. Through dogmas, the church establishes a common ground for its members, fostering unity in belief and practice.

In essence, dogmas are living expressions of the church's faith. They reflect the dynamic interaction between tradition and innovation, continuity and change, as the church seeks to remain faithful to the Gospel while addressing the needs and aspirations of its members in a changing world.



Review Questions

1. Which of the following is not a type of Christian Heresies in the Early Church?
 - a. Against the Trinity
 - b. Against the Nature of the Son
 - c. **On the Nature of the World**
 - d. Against the Hypostasis of God
2. What is Agnosticism?
 - a. A person who believes that nothing is known or can be known of the existence or nature of God
 - b. A person who denies the existence of God
 - c. A person who believes the material world is evil
 - d. A person who believes in God
3. Which heresy denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ, claiming he was a created being?
 - a. **Arianism**
 - b. Nestorianism
 - c. Monophysitism
 - d. Docetism
4. What heresy asserted that Jesus Christ had only one nature, which was divine, and that his human nature was absorbed by his divinity?
 - a. Arianism
 - b. Nestorianism
 - c. **Monophysitism**
 - d. Docetism
5. Which heresy proposed that Jesus Christ had two separate persons, one divine and one human?
 - a. Arianism
 - b. **Nestorianism**
 - c. Monophysitism
 - d. Docetism

6. What heresy taught that Jesus Christ only appeared to be human and that his physical body was an illusion?
 - a. Arianism
 - b. Nestorianism
 - c. Monophysitism
 - d. **Docetism**
7. Which heresy denied the full personhood of the Holy Spirit, considering Him a created being?
 - a. **Macedonianism**
 - b. Gnosticism
 - c. Pelagianism
 - d. Donatism
8. What heresy promoted the idea that salvation could be achieved through human effort and good works, downplaying the role of divine grace?
 - a. Gnosticism
 - b. Donatism
 - c. **Pelagianism**
 - d. Macedonianism
9. Which heresy claimed that the sacraments administered by sinful or unworthy priests were invalid?
 - a. Gnosticism
 - b. **Donatism**
 - c. Pelagianism
 - d. Macedonianism
10. What heresy emphasized secret knowledge as the key to salvation, often leading to esoteric and mystical interpretations of Christianity?
 - a. **Gnosticism**
 - b. Donatism
 - c. Pelagianism
 - d. Macedonianism
11. Which heresy asserted that God the Father suffered on the cross?
 - a. **Patipassianism**
 - b. Sabellianism
 - c. Adoptionism
 - d. Apollinarianism
12. What heresy taught that matter is inherently evil and that the physical world is a corruption of the spiritual realm?
 - a. Docetism
 - b. Arianism
 - c. Pelagianism
 - d. **Gnosticism**



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The Division after Chalcedon

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

The Exile of St. Dioscorus

The Council of Chalcedon, convened in 451 AD, was sparked by the heresy of Eutyches. This influential monk asserted that Christ possessed only a divine nature, denying his human nature, a belief known as Monophysitism. In response to the growing influence of Eutyches and his followers, Flavianus, the bishop of Constantinople, convened a local council in Ephesus in the year 448 AD. The council, attended by prominent theologians and church officials, thoroughly examined Eutyches' beliefs and ultimately reached a decision. After careful deliberation, the council excommunicated Eutyches from the Church, declaring his teachings to be heretical and incompatible with orthodox Christian doctrine.

However, Eutyches felt deeply aggrieved by the council's decision. He believed that he had not been given a fair opportunity to present his case and defend his beliefs adequately. He maintained that the excommunication was unjust and that he had not been granted a proper platform to engage in a meaningful debate before such a drastic measure was taken against him. In an attempt to rectify the situation and seek redress, Eutyches composed a series of letters. These letters were addressed to influential figures within the Church hierarchy, including Pope Leo I of Rome. In these communications, Eutyches passionately defended his theological positions, arguing that they were based on sound scriptural interpretation and were in alignment with the teachings of the early Church Fathers. He implored the recipients of his letters to reconsider the council's decision and to grant him a fair hearing.

In the year 449 AD, news reached Emperor Theodosius II, a ruler who held the church of Alexandria in high regard and devotion. The Emperor, seeking to resolve a theological dispute, entrusted Pope Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria, with the responsibility of overseeing a second council in Ephesus to hear the case of Eutyches, a monk who had been accused of heresy. This council, convinced by Eutyches' apparent repentance, readmitted him into the ranks of the clergy. However, in a controversial move, they also took punitive action against Pope Flavian of Constantinople and

several other bishops who had supported him. The council accused Pope Flavian and his allies of political scheming and deposed them from their positions.

The council of Chalcedon that followed convened primarily to address the issue of Eutyches's heresy and to examine the actions of Pope Dioscorus of Alexandria. Many historians believe that the council was orchestrated as a trap for Pope Dioscorus, driven by the desire of other episcopal sees to diminish the influence and prestige of the Alexandrian Church within the Empire.

The Tome, intended to clarify the orthodox position on the dual nature of Christ, was presented to Pope Dioscorus for review. However, Pope Dioscorus interpreted the Tome as promoting Nestorian ideology, which posited that Christ had two distinct and separate natures. This misunderstanding exacerbated tensions, leading Pope Dioscorus to excommunicate Pope Leo. The majority of the council, however, opposed the stance taken by Pope Dioscorus and the Egyptian bishops. The council fathers, through vigorous debates and theological discussions, posited the belief in Christ's dual nature—both divine and human—as articulated in the Tome and sent Pope Dioscorus in exile.

Aftermath of Chalcedon

Following the exile of St. Dioscorus, the council convened numerous meetings to deliberate on various matters. One significant issue that arose was the question of which among them would hold the highest rank and enjoy greater prerogatives. This discussion laid bare their true intentions, which were to reduce the Coptic Church of Alexandria to a position of inferiority, thereby elevating the status of Constantinople and Rome.

Emperor Marcianus, in a move that furthered their agenda, confirmed the exile of St. Dioscorus to the remote island of Gangra, located off the coast of Asia Minor. This act symbolized their unwavering commitment to subjugating the Coptic Church and consolidating power within the Byzantine Empire.

The council's deliberations and decisions revealed a profound desire for control and dominance. By exiling St. Dioscorus and seeking to diminish the influence of the Coptic Church, they sought to establish a hierarchy in which Constantinople and Rome held unquestionable authority. This strategic move was not merely about ecclesiastical matters but also about consolidating political power and asserting their dominance over religious institutions.

However, their actions ignited a fire of resistance among the Coptic Christians, who remained steadfast in their faith and unwavering in their support of St. Dioscorus. The Coptic Church, despite facing adversity, continued to flourish, preserving its unique traditions and spirituality.

Assignment of Proterius

When Emperor Marcianus approved the Council's verdict, and banished St. Dioscorus, he sent a message to the Alexandrian people informing them of this verdict and telling them that he had appointed a man by the name of Proterius to occupy his chair. He also warned them against any disobedience. Proterius was sent to Alexandria accompanied by troops who had orders to punish anyone who refused to submit to him. However, the Egyptians rebelled, as was their custom when they felt strongly about anything.

Upon approving the Council's verdict of banishing St. Dioscorus, the Patriarch of Alexandria, Marcianus dispatched a message to the Alexandrian people. The message conveyed not only the verdict of the Council but also the appointment of Proterius as the successor to St. Dioscorus and warned them of upcoming disobedience. Marcianus's decision was met with resistance. The appointment of Proterius, who was seen as an outsider, further inflamed tensions within the Alexandrian church.

To ensure the smooth transition of power, Marcianus sent troops alongside Proterius to Alexandria. These troops were instructed to quell any potential opposition to Proterius's authority. However, their presence further fueled the rebellion, as the Egyptians resented the perceived imposition of an external leader upon them.

The Coptic Church, known for their strong attachment to their traditions and religious beliefs, fiercely protested against the appointment of Proterius. They saw it as an encroachment upon their autonomy and a disregard for their deep-rooted customs. The rebellion was not merely a political act but also a manifestation of their convictions.

The Chair of the See of Alexandria

The Bishops met and decreed their unanimous support of St. Dioscorus. They officially excommunicated Leo and his Tome, the Chalcedon decrees, and Proterius. To counteract this measure, the imperial troops went to each bishop alone ordering him to sign the Chalcedon decrees. They all refused to sign, and regarded Proterius as a foreigner who seized a See he had no right to

occupy. In the year A.D. 456, news came to Alexandria that St. Dioscorus had passed to the Kingdom of Heaven. Consequently, the entire country mourned.

In a grand assembly, the Bishops convened to deliberate upon matters of faith and governance. With solemn expressions, they unanimously declared their unwavering support for the revered St. Dioscorus. Their decree, resonating through the halls, officially excommunicated Leo and his Tome, along with the decrees of Chalcedon and Proterius. This momentous announcement sent ripples throughout the Christian world.

To counter this bold measure, the imperial troops embarked on a strategic mission. They approached each bishop individually, delivering a stern order to sign the Chalcedon decrees. However, their efforts proved futile as every bishop steadfastly refused to comply. They viewed Proterius with disdain, considering him an outsider who had audaciously seized a See that rightfully belonged to another.

Support and Mission

Many of St. Dioscorus' friends remained steadfast in their loyalty towards him, refusing to abandon him during his time of trial. Through correspondence and personal visits, they maintained contact with him, providing a vital lifeline of support. Among these loyal companions was a bishop from Iberia, present-day Spain, named Peter. In his initial letter to St. Dioscorus, Bishop Peter meticulously recounted the events that unfolded in Chalcedon after his departure. He chronicled the proceedings of the Council of Chalcedon, detailing the accusations leveled against St. Dioscorus and the subsequent decisions reached.

St. Dioscorus' replies to Bishop Peter consistently reflected his unwavering conviction that he had acted righteously. He firmly maintained that he had stood steadfast in defense of his faith, refusing to yield to worldly powers that sought to influence his judgments. In his letters, St. Dioscorus expressed a profound sense of inner peace and contentment, knowing that he had remained true to his principles.

Remarkably, St. Dioscorus extended forgiveness to those who had wronged him, despite that they “spitefully used him and persecuted him.” . He held no grudges or bitterness towards his detractors, acknowledging that they had acted out of spite and persecution. This act of forgiveness further underscores St. Dioscorus' unwavering commitment to Christian values, even in the face of adversity.

Through his correspondence with Bishop Peter and other loyal friends, St. Dioscorus found solace and strength. Their unwavering support and shared belief in the righteousness of his actions sustained him during his exile. Their unwavering loyalty served as a testament to the enduring bonds of faith and friendship that transcended geographical and political boundaries.

Service

During his exile on the remote island of Gangra, St. Dioscorus dedicated his life to spreading Christianity and bringing heretics back to Orthodoxy. He relentlessly served his Lord, touching the hearts of many pagan residents who embraced the teachings of Christ under his guidance. Additionally, he successfully led several heretics back onto the path of Orthodox Christianity, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to his faith. Throughout his life, God raised loyal witnesses who recognized St. Dioscorus's unwavering devotion. One such witness was St. Severus, the Patriarch of Antioch in the sixth century. He boldly proclaimed St. Dioscorus was a martyr of Christ; he alone, refused to worship Baal in that false council”, highlighting his steadfast refusal to bow down to Baal during the infamous Council of Chalcedon.

Another witness, Mar Zakareya, Bishop of Modally in Asia Minor, described St. Dioscorus as “the man whose faith was like that of Athanasius, Kyrillos, and the other Church Doctors. And seeing that this intrepid man – Dioscorus – had trained himself from his tender years in the Orthodox faith, he refused to bow to the doubt-faced idol set up by Leo at Chalcedon”. He marveled at St. Dioscorus's unwavering commitment to Orthodox Christianity since his youth, which gave him the strength to resist the false idols set up by Emperor Leo at Chalcedon.

Similarly, Abba Petros, the 27th Pope of Alexandria, honored St. Dioscorus as "Christ's loyal martyr," recognizing his unwavering dedication and unwavering faith. Five years after his sentence of exile, St. Dioscorus ascended to the heavenly ranks, leaving behind a legacy of steadfastness and unwavering devotion to his Lord.

Pope Timothy II

News spread like wildfire that St. Dioscorus, a pillar of faith and devotion, had passed away, leaving behind an immeasurable void in the hearts of his followers. The entire country plunged into mourning, as if a celestial light had been extinguished. The governor of Alexandria was out of the city when the sad news came. Seizing this chance, they convened a meeting, their hearts united in a common purpose. With unwavering determination, they unanimously elected St. Timothy, a revered secretary of the esteemed St. Dioscorus, to serve as the 26th successor to St. Mark, the founder of the

Church of Alexandria. St. Timothy, a man of profound faith and unwavering conviction, assumed the mantle of leadership with humility and grace. Together with his dedicated bishops, he reaffirmed their excommunication of the Council of Chalcedon, a decision that sparked controversy and divided the Christian world. The council's decrees, they believed, deviated from the true teachings of the faith, compromising the integrity of the church.

Emperor Marcianus, upon learning of these developments, responded with an iron fist. He ordered the exile of St. Timothy and his brother to the desolate island of Gangra, where St. Dioscorus had previously faced banishment. News of this harsh decree spread through the streets of Alexandria, igniting outrage and fury among the Egyptian populace.

The people, who held St. Timothy and his brother in high esteem, could not bear to see them unjustly exiled. They resolved to take matters into their own hands. Crowds gathered outside the palace occupied by Proterius. Panic-stricken, Proterius sought refuge in the baptistery of his church, but in their fury they pursued Proterius and killed him.

Emperor Basiliscus restores Pope Timothy

In the year 474 AD, the Eastern Roman Empire faced a significant transition as Emperor Marcianus, who ruled for seven years, passed away without an heir to succeed him. This event opened the door for Basiliscus to ascend to the imperial throne. Basiliscus, upon assuming power, made a crucial decision that would impact the religious landscape of the empire. He ordered the return of St. Timothy, a prominent patriarch of Alexandria, who had been forced into exile during the reign of Emperor Zeno.

St. Timothy, recognizing this opportunity, seized the moment to bring with him the body of St. Dioscorus, the patriarch of Alexandria from 444 to 454 AD, who had been condemned as a heretic by the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. Pope Timothy, the bishop of Rome, played a vital role during this pivotal period. He made a bold request to Emperor Basiliscus, urging him to allow the exiled bishops to return to their respective dioceses. His intervention aimed to foster reconciliation and restore the unity of the Church.

Recognizing the importance of addressing theological disputes and promoting unity, Pope Timothy convened a council in Constantinople, which was attended by an impressive number of 500 bishops from across the empire. This council served as a platform for discussing and resolving doctrinal differences. During the council, Pope Timothy reaffirmed the anathema, or condemnation, against the Eutychian heresy. Eutychianism, named after the monk Eutyches, held the belief that Christ's divine nature had absorbed his human nature, denying the full humanity of Jesus. The council

rejected this teaching as incompatible with Christian orthodoxy. Furthermore, the council also rejected the Tome of Leo, a letter written by Pope Leo I that sought to define the relationship between the divine and human natures of Christ. The Tome of Leo was viewed by some as supporting Nestorianism, a doctrine that emphasized the separation of the divine and human natures in Christ.

Through these actions, Pope Timothy and the council endeavored to establish reconciliation among the churches of Jerusalem, Constantinople, Antioch, and Alexandria. The efforts of Pope Timothy and the council were successful in achieving their objectives. Reconciliation was established, and it endured for several years. However, the challenges facing the Eastern Roman Empire and the Church were far from over, and subsequent events would test the resilience of these hard-won agreements.

The Henoticon

On the 28th of July A.D 482, the emperor Zeno issued the "Henoticon," presenting a description of the religious situation in the East. It was a realistic report stating the condition of the church following the Council of Chalcedon. It said: "For it happened that throughout the previous decades (years), time has witnessed generations pass away, some deprived of the baptismal renovation, others without participation in the divine communion to the point of departure, and tens of thousands of death have been recklessly inflicted to the extent that not only the earth, but the atmosphere has been polluted. Who would not pray that such things may be substituted for better ones?"

Emperor Zeno, who began his royal rule by canceling the resolution of Emperor Basiliscus and sending the non-Chalcedonian bishops to exile, came to understand how the church in the East suffered bitterly from the persecution of the royal court. We do not forget that Zeno, later became amicable to the church of Alexandria, in particular to the monks of this church especially after his daughter Hilaria (Hillary) disguised in a monk's uniform and led an ascetic life. Nobody knew anything about her until she had healed her only sister from sickness. The Emperor then, gave generously to the monasteries in Egypt. In that proclamation Zeno ignored the Council of Chalcedon and the Tome of Leo. In the meantime he took the positive side to confirm the unity of the nature of our Lord Jesus Christ without reference to any particular text.

In fact the Henoticon did not return to the persecuted non- Chalcedonians their rights. It only allowed them the freedom of practicing their spiritual and ecclesiastical activities without being obliged to accept the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon. Therefore they welcomed it, not for the theology it bears, but because it gave them the freedom to work regardless of the clear tendency it

bears towards the thought of those who believed in one nature. This Henoticon gave an opportunity for the four main Sees of the East to unite. The See of the west in Rome didn't occupy itself with that matter. The delegates of Rome expressed their line of thought in the meeting of the Council of Chalcedon held on the 22nd of October A.D 451, saying that the East should accept Rome's point of view or else withdraw, leaving Rome on her own.

On the 28th of July 484, Felix III of Rome called a synod of 27 bishops and excommunicated Pope Peter of Alexandria and Patriarch Acacias, yet they didn't give the matter any attention. In spite of the death of Acacias in 489, Pope Peter III in 490 and Zeno in 491, Emperor Anastasius I (A.D 491-518) held to the Henoticon. The Patriarchs of Constantinople had to sign it when they were being ordained. This continued until the death of the emperor in 518. In that period St. Severus of Antioch (512-518) appeared as one of the most famous theologians on the subject of the one nature of our Lord Jesus Christ. The Church of Alexandria lived in peace together with the other Sees in the East, and had a loving relationship with Emperor Anastasius. This lasted until the enthronement of Justinian when the troubles newly began.

Post-Chalcedon

In the year Pope Timothy was ordained (A.D. 519), Anastasius died and Justinian became emperor. He inclined towards Chalcedonianism, yet his wife, Theodora the pious, played the role of trying to appease him at several occasions. Thus his era was characterized by periods of trouble and periods of rest. Once, as Justinian entered the church with bishop John the Cappadocian, some Chalcedonians shouted against St. Severus of Antioch and demanded his trial, while others shouted with applause as a reaction to the former disapproval. The emperor then convened a council to settle the matter. When the Pope of Alexandria learned about the emperor's intention, he didn't go to that council. The emperor commanded that he would be put under arrest, and sent him to exile.

A troop of soldiers entered the church by force while the people gathered in support of their pope. The matter developed into a battle between the armed soldiers and the unarmed congregation. The soldiers killed many of the people then arrested the pope and sent him to exile. The emperor imposed an alien patriarch named Apollinarius. Later on the Pope came back but he was hiding and running from a city to another running from Justinian.

Same strategy was adopted by Justinian with pope Theodosius (the 32nd pope). He ordered him to endorse the resolutions of the Council of Chalcedon, promising to appoint him a Patriarch all over Africa. The Pope considered these promises devilish and refused to sign. The emperor then summoned him and received him with a great welcome and tempted him six times but the Pope

refused. The emperor then imprisoned him in Constantinople and ordained an alien patriarch (Paul El-Tanisi) and sent him with an entourage of soldiers. The alien bishop remained for a whole year without any of the congregation to pray with him except the ruler and the soldiers. He often heard slogans like, "down with the traitor! down with Jude the alien!," so he asked the emperor to relieve him. The Pope remained in prison for 28 years until he died in A.D 567.

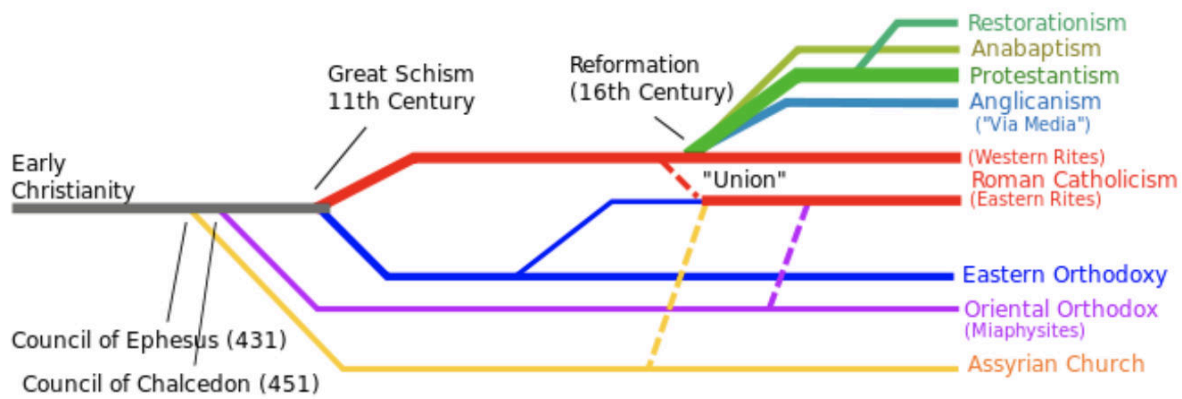
Justinian I thought that he was capable of bringing back the unity to the empire by condemning the "Three Chapters (Tria Kephalaia)." These chapters were the writings of the semi-Nestorian authors and were included in the documents of the Council of Chalcedon [the writings of Theodore of Mopsuestia, Theodoret of Cyrus and Ibas of Edessa.] In A.D 553 the Council convened in Constantinople and affirmed the anathemas of the "Three Chapters". It also affirmed the emperor's anathema against the Origenists and Origen's writings.

But this council failed and didn't achieve what it was targeting especially that this council did not provide comfort to the people of Alexandria while their legitimate Pope spent the greater time of his papacy in a prison in Constantinople. Even when Paul El-Tenaisy, the alien patriarch, died, another named Apollinarius was ordained by the emperor's command. This man entered Alexandria in the uniform of a military commander and gave his orders to the people to assemble in the church. He then took off the military clothes and put on the priestly clothes and read to them the imperial decree. At that time cries of protest were heard aloud as the alien patriarch ordered the soldiers to use force and many were martyred. People called that day "The Massacre"... at that time the emperor was about to depart. Some historians assure that Justinian acted in good faith, but what happened to the Copts stirred them up against Byzantium.

When Emperor Justinian died on November 14th, 565, he was succeeded in turn by Justin II (565-578), Tiberius (578-582), Maurice (582-602) and Phocas (602-610). They all followed in the line of Justinian I in supporting the alien patriarch who represented the Byzantine authority not the ecclesiastical ministry. This fermented the divide of the Chalcedonians and non-Chalcedonians churches.

Post-Chalcedon

Following the aftermath of the Council of Chalcedon, the Church divided into many branches and sects of Christianity, wherein we fall under Oriental Orthodox Christians. Below, one can see that we are linked to Roman Catholics who implicate Eastern Rites of the Church, as well as there is a union to those who use Western Rites. From Roman Catholicism there branched many other beliefs and differences, leading to the multitude of sects seen below.



It is important to recognize that while we share a common foundation in the beliefs and values of early Christianity, the Great Schism of 1054 AD marked a permanent and enduring division within Christianity. This schism occurred due to theological disagreements, political tensions, and cultural differences between the Eastern and Western branches of the Church. Consequently, it is imperative for us to remain vigilant and avoid succumbing to the allure of heretical teachings propagated by other branches of the Church.

By staying true to the core principles and practices of early Christianity, we can strive to preserve the purity of our faith and maintain a deep connection with the teachings of Christ. Our hope lies in the eventual reunification of all Christians under the banner of the Father, where we can once again experience the unity and harmony that characterized the early Church.



Review Questions

1. Which branch of Christianity do we fall under post-Chalcedon?
 - a. Eastern Orthodox
 - b. Roman Catholic
 - c. Protestant
 - d. **Oriental Orthodox**
2. When was this council started? (A: It started following the heresy of Eutyches.)
3. St. Dioscorus forgave those who wronged him.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
4. The council initially opposed the Egyptians.
 - a. **True**
 - b. False
5. What were the council's intentions after the exile of St. Dioscorus?

- a. To restore peace and unity to the Church
 - b. **To establish the supremacy of the Roman and Constantinople**
 - c. To condemn the teachings of Monophysitism
 - d. None of the above
6. How long after his exile did St. Dioscorus depart to the Kingdom of Heaven?
- a. 3 years
 - b. **5 years**
 - c. 7 years
 - d. 9 years
7. Who were some supporters of St. Dioscorus during his exile?
- a. Mar Zakareya
 - b. Bishop of Modally in Asia Minor
 - c. Abba Petros
 - d. **All of the above**
8. What did St. Dioscorus do during his exile?
- a. **He converted many people to Christianity.**
 - b. He wrote several books on theology.
 - c. He founded a monastery.
 - d. He did nothing.
9. What was the final act of the Chair and See of Alexandria after Chalcedon?
- a. **They excommunicated the Pope Leo and his Tome.**
 - b. They accepted the Council of Chalcedon.
 - c. They declared themselves independent of the Byzantine Empire.
 - d. They supported Pope Leo.
10. Who is St. Timothy?
- a. One of the Secretaries of St. Dioscorus
 - b. The 26th successor to St. Mark
 - c. He and his bishops reaffirmed their excommunication of the Council of Chalcedon
 - d. **All of the above**



Books & References

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The Great Schism

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

What is the Great Schism?

The Great Schism, also known as the East-West Schism or the Schism of 1054, marked the break between the Western (Roman Catholic) and Eastern (Orthodox) Churches. Numerous theological, political, and cultural factors contributed to the split, and its consequences were profound and far-reaching. The effects of the Schism can still be felt today, and it remains a significant point of division between the two branches of Christianity. The seeds of division between the Eastern and Western Churches were sown over many centuries. Theological differences, such as the nature of the Holy Trinity and the role of the Pope, had long been a source of tension. Political tensions also played a role, as the Eastern and Western Roman Empires had split in the 4th century, leading to distinct cultural and political identities. Christianity was never transformed to such an extent again until the Reformation in the sixteenth century.

Historical Background: The Fall of Rome

The schism between the Eastern and Western churches was not a sudden event with a clear starting date. Instead, it was the culmination of a long and complex process that began well before the eleventh century and continued for some time after.

During the 4th century AD, Emperor Constantine moved the capital of the Roman Empire from Rome to Constantinople, located in the eastern part of the empire. This shift in the center of power marked the beginning of a gradual divergence between the East and the West. Constantinople soon became the most powerful imperial city, overshadowing Rome in terms of political and cultural influence. By the end of the 4th century, the Roman Empire had been permanently divided into two parts: the Eastern Roman Empire, with its capital in Constantinople, and the Western Roman Empire, of which Rome remained a key city. This division was further solidified when Theodosius I, the last Roman Emperor to rule the united empire, died in 395.

The Western Roman Empire faced significant challenges in the centuries that followed. It was plagued by internal political instability, economic decline, and barbarian invasions. In the 5th century,

the Western Empire finally disintegrated, and its lands were conquered and ruled by Germanic tribes. This marked the end of the Roman Empire in the West. In contrast, the Eastern Roman Empire, also known as the Byzantine Empire, survived for nearly a thousand years after the fall of the West. The Byzantine Empire preserved much of the Roman cultural and political heritage and became a major power in the eastern Mediterranean.

The collapse of the Western Roman Empire and the continued existence of the Eastern Roman Empire led to a significant divergence in the social, cultural, and political makeup of the East and the West. This divide was further exacerbated by linguistic differences, as Greek became the dominant language in the East, while Latin remained the language of the church in the West. As new states emerged in the West, the Roman Pope gradually grew in power and influence. The emperors of the Holy Roman Empire, founded by the Frankish king Charlemagne in 800, were crowned and legitimized by the Pope of Rome. These developments in the West were not replicated in the East, where the Eastern Roman Empire maintained its own political and religious structures.

As Rome's political power waxed in the West, the other patriarchal churches of the East, such as Constantinople, Antioch, and Jerusalem, resisted its growing sense of superiority over them. This resistance laid the foundation for the eventual schism between the Eastern and Western churches, which would formally occur in 1054.

Rise of the Papacy

After the fall of the Western Roman Empire in the 5th century AD, Europe descended into chaos. The common language, coinage, communications, and mail service that had connected the vast empire all but disappeared. In its place, small tribal states emerged, each with its own ruler and culture. Amidst this fragmentation, the Church remained a beacon of stability and continuity. The monks, dedicated to preserving the Roman culture, wrote the Scriptures in Latin and taught in monasteries. The Bishop of Rome, the only Patriarch in the West, stood out as a central figure in a sea of small lordships. Two influential figures, Pope Leo the Great and Pope Gregory I, played a significant role in shaping the papacy's growing influence. Under their leadership, the Bishops of Rome became known in the West as Pope, or Father, a title that carried both spiritual and temporal authority.

The vacuum in leadership created by the collapse of the Roman Empire allowed the Pope to emerge as a symbol of stability and authority. Small kings and lords turned to Rome for decisions, not just on spiritual matters, but also on temporal issues. The Pope's influence extended far beyond the Church's walls, encompassing political, economic, and social realms. This transformation was further solidified by the concept of apostolic succession, which held that the Pope was the direct successor of

St. Peter, the apostle chosen by Jesus Christ. This belief granted the Pope spiritual authority and moral legitimacy, making him the ultimate arbiter of religious and ethical matters.

In an age of darkness and uncertainty, the Papacy provided a sense of order and purpose for many people. It became the custodian of ancient knowledge, the protector of the poor and vulnerable, and the voice of reason in a turbulent world. The rise of the Papacy marked a new chapter in European history, where the Church, once subservient to the Roman Empire, became a dominant force in its own right.

Spiritual Pitfalls: Pride - Ego - Envy - Power

In the following passage from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus engages His disciples in a profound lesson on the nature of true greatness within His kingdom. The scene unfolds as Jesus and His disciples journey to Capernaum. He discerns that they have been disputing amongst themselves about who among them would be considered the greatest. This reveals a common human tendency towards ambition, rivalry, and the desire for recognition and status. However, Jesus' teachings challenge these worldly notions and offer a radically different perspective.

“Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, “What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?” But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest. 35 And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all.” Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, 37 “Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.” (Mark 9:33-37)

Jesus identifies the root cause of their dispute as residing in the spiritual pitfalls of pride, ego, envy, and the pursuit of power. These are deeply ingrained human tendencies that often lead to conflict, division, and a distorted understanding of one's place in relation to God and others. Pride is a sinful attitude that exalts oneself above others and seeks glory for oneself instead of giving glory to God. Highly related to pride, is ego - the sense of self that is separate from God and others which often leads to arrogance and self-centeredness. Jesus calls his disciples to reject pride and ego and instead adopt a humble and servant-hearted attitude.

The disciples were envious of each other and sought to be set apart from among each other where one would have more power than another. Yet, Christ clearly reprimanded them for such thoughts and pursuits. What happened here with the disciples is shockingly similar with how the

church of Rome approached the situation, being envious of Constantinople claiming supremacy over the other thrones.

In response to these spiritual pitfalls, Jesus calls His disciples to a radical reversal of values. He teaches that true greatness in His kingdom is not found in seeking positions of authority, dominance, or personal recognition. Instead, it is found in embracing a posture of humility, service, and self-sacrifice. Servanthood is the essence of Jesus' own life and ministry. He came not to be served but to serve, and ultimately to give His life as a ransom for many. He calls His disciples to follow His example and to consider others as more important than themselves. To further illustrate His point, Jesus takes a little child and places him in their midst. The child represents innocence, vulnerability, and dependence. He calls us to be like little children, who are humble, dependent, and trusting. He teaches us that true greatness is found in serving others and in putting their needs before our own. When we embrace humility and service, we experience the peace and joy that come from living in accordance with God's will.

Towards the end of the passage of Mark 9, the Lord concludes the dialogue by encouraging the disciples to be salt to the world by preserving its peace. A lack of peace, is a lack of salt. "Salt is good, but if the salt loses its flavor, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace with one another." (Mark 9:50 NKJV)

Church Fathers

The Church Fathers, the esteemed theologians and leaders of the early Christian Church, consistently emphasized the paramount importance of humility as a foundational virtue for spiritual growth and communal harmony. Their teachings echo the Gospel message, underscoring that true exaltation is achieved through embracing lowliness and service.

Saint Augustine, a prominent figure in the Patristic era, eloquently articulated this principle through a metaphor of a tree. He observed, "Observe a tree, how it first tends downwards, that it may then shoot forth upwards. It fastens its root low in the ground, so that it may send forth its top towards heaven. Is it not from humility that it endeavors to rise? But without humility it will not attain higher things. You are wanting to grow up into the air without a root. Such is not growth, but a collapse." In this analogy, Augustine highlights the paradoxical nature of spiritual growth; it is through grounding oneself in humility, akin to a tree's roots delving deep into the soil, that one can truly ascend towards the divine.

Similarly, St. Gregory of Nyssa, a Cappadocian Father renowned for his mystical theology, stressed the importance of humility in fostering a sense of unity and fellowship within the Christian community. He urged believers to shun vanity and embrace simplicity, harmony, and a guileless attitude. "Let vanity be unknown among you. Let simplicity and harmony and a guileless attitude weld the community together. Let each remind himself that he is not only subordinate to the brother at his side, but to all. If he knows this, he will truly be a disciple of Christ." He emphasized the interconnectedness of the community, reminding each individual that they are not only subordinate to their neighbor but to all. This understanding, he asserted, is the hallmark of a true disciple of Christ.

Finally, St. John Chrysostom, the Golden-Mouth, offered a direct and challenging exhortation to those seeking spiritual advancement. He proclaimed, "If you are in love with precedence and the highest honor, pursue the things in last place, pursue being the least valued of all, pursue being the lowliest of all, pursue being the smallest of all, pursue placing yourselves behind others." St. John Chrysostom's words serve as a powerful reminder that the path to true greatness lies in embracing humility and selflessness, even to the point of seeking the lowest position.

These teachings of the Church Fathers, rooted in the Gospel message and exemplified in the lives of the saints. In a world often driven by ambition, self-promotion, and the pursuit of recognition, the call to embrace humility and servanthood stands as a counter-cultural witness. By grounding oneself in humility, the doors of the transformative power of God's grace are opened and aligned with the example of Christ, who humbled Himself to the point of death on the cross.

Geographical Split: Rome - Pope Leo IX

Leo IX, born Bruno of Egisheim-Dagsburg in Alsace, Germany, ascended to the papacy in 1048 AD. His early training under Cluniac monks profoundly shaped his theological convictions. Leo firmly believed in the "filioque" doctrine, which asserts that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, rather than from the Father alone, as held by the Orthodox Church. He was also a staunch advocate of papal supremacy, maintaining that the pope held the highest authority within the Church and that all other bishops were subordinate to him. Additionally, Leo IX strongly supported the celibacy of clergy, believing that it was essential for priests to remain free from worldly distractions and fully dedicated to their spiritual duties.

Leo IX's theological beliefs were not mere abstract concepts; he actively sought to implement them throughout his territories. As an able administrator, he insisted that these doctrines be strictly adhered to by all clergy under his jurisdiction. When he encountered resistance, particularly in Southern Italy, where many clergy were married, Leo IX did not hesitate to take decisive action. He

deposed those who refused to comply with his demands, making it clear that he would tolerate no deviation from the theological principles he held dear.

Furthermore, Leo IX's pursuit of doctrinal uniformity extended beyond the Latin Church. He set his sights on Eastern rite churches that operated within his domains but refused to conform to his demands. With unwavering determination, Leo IX closed these churches, demonstrating his unwavering commitment to ensuring that his theological vision prevailed throughout his territories.

Pope Leo IX's theological convictions and his unwavering efforts to enforce them had a profound impact on the medieval Church. His insistence on papal supremacy strengthened the authority of the papacy and helped to centralize power within the Church. His advocacy for clerical celibacy significantly influenced the development of the priesthood and contributed to the establishment of a distinct clerical identity. Moreover, Leo IX's role in promoting the "filioque" doctrine contributed to the growing theological divergence between the Western and Eastern Churches.

Geographical Split: Constantinople - Patriarch Michael Cerularius

Meanwhile in Constantinople, Patriarch Michael Cerularius, a staunch and unyielding monk, ascended to the esteemed Patriarchal seat. His unwavering resolve and strict adherence to religious principles defined his character. The Patriarch was deeply disturbed and alarmed by Pope Leo IX's audacious act of deposing his archbishop and priests. He viewed this as an unacceptable encroachment upon the authority of the Eastern Orthodox Church and a direct challenge to his position as the supreme ecclesiastical leader in Constantinople.

In response to the Pope's actions, Patriarch Michael Cerularius retaliated swiftly and decisively. He ordered the closure of all Latin Rite churches within his jurisdiction. This bold move was a clear indication of his determination to safeguard the independence and autonomy of the Eastern Orthodox Church. It sent a powerful message to the Pope and the Western Church, demonstrating that he would not tolerate any attempts to undermine his authority or the traditions of his church.

Emboldened by his actions, Patriarch Michael Cerularius refused to yield to Pope Leo IX's demands. Instead, he stood firm in his convictions, refusing to accept the Pope's claims of papal supremacy. He believed that the Bishop of Rome had no right to interfere in the affairs of the Eastern Orthodox Church and that his authority extended only to the Western Church.

Pope Leo IX, unwavering in his own beliefs, responded to Patriarch Michael Cerularius's defiance by issuing an ultimatum. He demanded that both the Patriarch and the Byzantine Emperor, Constantine IX Monomachus, submit to his papal authority. This audacious demand further escalated

the tensions between the Eastern and Western Churches and brought the centuries-long simmering differences to a boiling point.

The standoff between Patriarch Michael Cerularius and Pope Leo IX symbolized the deep-seated theological, cultural, and political divisions that had been brewing for centuries between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. Their unwavering positions set the stage for the Great Schism of 1054, a momentous event that would permanently divide the Christian Church into the Roman Catholic Church in the West and the Eastern Orthodox Church in the East.

Theological drift: The Filioque - Procession of the Holy Spirit

The Heresy explained

During this time, due to the difference practices and teachings differed geographically. For example, while the Orthodox church maintained its usage of the Nicene Creed, the Church of Rome amended it for the Filioque. The Filioque term, derived from the Latin phrase "Filioque," holds significant importance in Christian theology, particularly regarding the procession of the Holy Spirit. While the Catholic Church embraces the belief that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches reject this addition, viewing it as an unauthorized alteration of the original Nicene Creed.

The term "Filioque" translates to "and the Son," and its insertion into the Western version of the Nicene Creed underscores the doctrine that the Holy Spirit proceeds not only from the Father but also from the Son. This theological interpretation, introduced in the West, became a significant point of contention during the Great Schism of 1054, leading to a deep division between the Eastern and Western branches of Christianity. At the heart of the Filioque controversy lies a distinction between the eternal Procession of the Holy Spirit and the temporal mission of the Spirit. The Catholic Church maintains that the verb "proceed" in the context of the Creed refers to the eternal relationship between the Holy Spirit and the Father, asserting that the Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father alone.

Conversely, the Eastern Orthodox and Oriental Orthodox churches emphasize that the Procession of the Holy Spirit pertains solely to the Father's role. Our Lord Jesus Christ specified, "But when the Helper comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father, He will testify of Me." (John 15:26) The orthodox church maintains that the Holy Spirit's temporal mission, which involves being sent by both the Father and the Son, should not be conflated with the eternal Procession. While the Holy Spirit is sent into the world by the Son, as Jesus

stated in John 15:26, this does not mean that the Spirit originates from the Son. The Father remains the Unique Source of the Godhead, and the Holy Spirit proceeds eternally from the Father alone. To claim that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son diminishes the Spirit's status and undermines the fundamental nature of the Trinity. It reduces the Spirit to a mere extension or agent of the Father and the Son, rather than recognizing the Spirit's unique and essential role as the third person of the Trinity.

The Heresy as seen by the Fathers

The early Fathers, such as St. Didymus the Blind, underscored the Father's unique role as the "Fons Deitatis" or the "Source of Divinity." This doesn't imply any superiority or anteriority within the Godhead, as all three Persons are co-eternal and co-equal. Rather, it signifies the Father's distinct role as the Unbegotten, the One from whom the Son is eternally begotten and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeds.

St. Didymus's commentary on the Spirit proceeding from the Father highlights this point. ““He does not say, “from God” or “from the Almighty” but “from the Father,” because though the Father and God Almighty are the same, yet the Spirit of truth properly proceeds from God as the Father, the Begetter.... The Father and the Son together send the Spirit of truth: He comes by the will both of the Father and the Son.” (St. Didymus the Blind) While acknowledging the Father and God Almighty as one and the same, he emphasizes that the Spirit of Truth "properly proceeds from God as the Father, the Begetter." This emphasizes the Father's unique paternal role within the Trinity.

The Son, the Second Person of the Trinity, is eternally begotten of the Father. This generation is not a temporal event but an eternal reality within the Godhead. As St. Augustine eloquently puts it, the Son refers "all that he has to him from whom he is." This reflects the Son's intimate relationship with the Father and his complete dependence on Him for his being. The quote can be read in its full context, “If the Holy Spirit then proceeds both from the Father and the Son, why does the Son say, “Who proceeds from the Father”? He says this because it agrees with his general way of referring all that he has to him from whom he is.” (St. Augustine)

The Holy Spirit, the Third Person of the Trinity, proceeds from the Father. This procession is distinct from the Son's generation. As St. Gregory of Nazianzus explains, the Holy Spirit "comes forth from the Father indeed, but not after the manner of the Son, for it is not by generation but by procession." This distinction underscores the unique relationship of the Holy Spirit within the Trinity.

The disagreement over the Filioque term reflects broader theological differences between the Orthodox and Western Christian traditions. The Orthodox churches place great emphasis on the

monarchy of the Father, upholding the view that the Father is the sole source of divinity within the Trinity. Additionally, they emphasize the distinction between the uncreated nature of God and the created nature of the world, including the Holy Spirit's role in creation. The Father is the Unique Source of the Godhead, the Son eternally begotten by the Father, and the Holy Spirit eternally proceeding from the Father, are also equally God. To claim that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son places the Holy Spirit in a state of subordination (one of the early church heresies) to the Father and the Son.

Theological drift: Leavened vs. Unleavened Bread

The Eastern and Western churches have also long debated over the use of leavened or unleavened bread in the Eucharist. This seemingly simple difference in practice holds profound theological and symbolic significance. In the Orthodox tradition, leavened bread is used in the Eucharist, while the Western tradition uses unleavened bread. This divergence stems from differing interpretations of the scriptural accounts of the Last Supper.

In the Greek original manuscripts of the Gospels, the bread at the Last Supper is referred to as "artos," a term that does not specify whether the bread was leavened or unleavened. However, the Western church interprets the Jewish Passover tradition, which requires unleavened bread, to be the context for the Last Supper. Therefore, they hold that unleavened bread should be used in the Eucharist.

The Orthodox church, on the other hand, emphasizes the distinction between the Last Supper and the Passover meal. They argue that Jesus first ate the Passover meal with unleavened bread, as required by Jewish law. However, after washing the disciples' feet, He instituted the Eucharist with leavened bread, which they term the Mystical Supper. The choice of leavened bread in the Eastern tradition is rich in symbolism. Leaven, a substance that causes dough to rise, is seen as a symbol of sin (1 Corinthians 5:7-8). By using leavened bread, the Eastern church acknowledges that Christ, as the Lamb of God, carried the sin of the world (John 1:29). Furthermore, leavened bread is seen as a symbol of life and resurrection. Just as leaven causes dough to rise, so too does Christ's resurrection represent the triumph over death. The use of leavened bread in the Eucharist thus serves as a powerful reminder of Christ's victory over sin and death.

In contrast, the use of unleavened bread in the Western tradition emphasizes the purity and sinlessness of Christ. Unleavened bread, which is devoid of leaven, represents the absence of sin. This interpretation aligns with the Western church's understanding of Christ as the spotless Lamb of God. This practice, however, began only after the 9th century and only in the church of Rome.

Theological drift: Celibacy of Clergy

The Eastern Church has historically opposed the concept of celibate priests serving the congregation. This position is based on the belief that priests should be able to relate to the joys and challenges of married life and that a married clergy is better able to serve the needs of the faithful. This belief is rooted in the St. Paul's writings in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, where he outlines the qualifications for a bishop and a deacon. In these verses, Paul emphasizes the importance of a blameless life, faithfulness to one's wife, and the ability to manage one's household well. He also warns against pride, greed, and a lack of self-control:

If a man desires the position of a bishop, he desires a good work. A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, temperate, sober-minded, of good behavior, hospitable, able to teach; not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous; one who rules his own house well, having his children in submission with all reverence (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?); not a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil. Moreover he must have a good testimony among those who are outside, lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil. – 1 Timothy 3:1-7

St. Paul's words suggest that he believed that priests should be mature and responsible individuals who are able to lead by example. He understood that the life of a priest is a demanding one, and that it requires a deep commitment to God and to the Church. The Eastern Church's opposition to clerical celibacy is also based on the belief that marriage is a sacred institution that is blessed by God. Marriage is seen as a way for priests to experience the fullness of human love and to share in the joys and sorrows of family life.

While the Eastern Church has traditionally opposed clerical celibacy, there have been some exceptions to this rule. In some cases, priests who have been widowed or who have never been married have been allowed to serve in the clergy. However, these cases are relatively rare, and the vast majority of Eastern priests are married.

Mentions of preferred celibacy in the church of Rome began in the 4th century when one Pope left his wife in order to accept the office and another, Pope Pelagius II, enacted orders of clerical celibacy while his successor Pope Gregory I, thought these regulation too strict and modified them. These development gradually occurred in Rome, while all other apostolic sees maintained their stance.

St. Peter notably respected in the Western church was married. According to Clement's account, when St. Peter witnessed his wife being led to her execution, he did not succumb to despair or overwhelming grief. Instead, his heart filled with a sense of profound joy and encouragement. He recognized that her death was not an end but rather a journey home to the Lord. With a voice filled with love and comfort, St. Peter called out to his wife by name, reminding her, "Remember the Lord." These simple yet powerful words served as a testament to their extraordinary bond and unwavering commitment to their faith.

“They say, accordingly, that the blessed Peter, on seeing his wife led to death, rejoiced on account of her call and conveyance home, and called very encouragingly and comfortingly, addressing her by name, 'Remember the Lord'. Such was the marriage of the blessed, and their perfect disposition towards those dearest to them. Thus also the Apostle says, 'That he who marries should be as though he married not', and deem his marriage free of inordinate affection, and inseparable from love to the Lord; to which the true husband exhorted his wife to cling on her departure out of this life to the Lord.” (St. Clement of Alexandria) In this moment of ultimate sacrifice, St. Peter demonstrated the true meaning of marital love. He fulfilled St. Paul's objective when St. Paul says 'That he who marries should be as though he married not' as St. Peter did not cling to his wife with selfish desire but encouraged her to embrace her destiny and find solace in her connection to the divine.

Theological drift: Primacy and "Infallibility" of the Roman Pope

The teaching on the supremacy of the pope arose in the ninth century and remains a fundamental difference between Roman Catholicism and Orthodoxy. Catholics believe that Jesus Christ designated the Apostle Peter as his vicar on earth, granting him unparalleled authority over the apostles and the entire Church. They interpret the passage in Matthew 16:17-19, where Jesus says to Peter, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven. And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”(Matthew 16:17-19), as evidence of St. Peter's special role. Additionally, they emphasize St. Peter's prominence in various biblical accounts, such as his walking on water and his pivotal role in the early Church.

However, Orthodox Christians challenge this interpretation, pointing to other passages in the Bible that suggest a more egalitarian relationship among the apostles. Instances where Jesus emphasized humility and service rather than hierarchical structures are an example. On the way to

Capernaum, the disciples discussed who would be the greatest among themselves (Mk 9:34), so our Lord sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, “If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all” (Mk 9:35).

In Matthew 20:25-26, when the mother of Zebedee’s sons (St. James & St. John) asked the Lord that they might sit one on His right and the other on His left in His Kingdom (Mt 20:21), our Lord said to the disciples, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave” (Mt 20:25-26). He admonishes the disciples against seeking greatness or authority. Obviously our Lord did not assign St. Peter (or any other disciple) the leadership of the twelve, on the contrary He explicitly said, “It shall not be so among you” (Matthew 20:26).

The Acts of the Apostles further supports the Orthodox view, as it depicts the apostles and elders collectively making decisions and resolving disputes, without any indication of Peter's singular authority. For instance, in Acts 15:6, when the apostles and elders came together to consider the matter of keeping Moses’ Law by the Gentiles (Acts 15:6), St. James presided over the assembly and gave the final decision on the matter while St. Peter was among the regular speakers (Acts 15:13).

Furthermore, St. Paul who mentioned not preaching where another apostle preached (Romans 15:20), was clearly mentioned having served Rome. St. Paul met with the leaders of the Jews in Rome three days after his arrival to the city (Acts 28:16-17) and they did not know anything about Christianity, they said to St. Paul, “we desire to hear from you what you think; for concerning this sect, we know that it is spoken against everywhere” (Acts 28:22). On an appointed day, they all gathered at St. Paul’s house who started to persuade them concerning our Lord from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening (Acts 28:23) and “some were persuaded by the things which were spoken, and some disbelieved” (Acts 28:24). St. Paul said to them, “Let it be known to you that the salvation of God has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will hear it” (Acts 28:28). It is written that St. Paul stayed for two whole years in Rome preaching the Kingdom and teaching the things, which concern our Lord with all confidence, no one forbidding him (Acts 28:30-31). St. Paul is the founder of the Church of Rome

Moreover, we distinguish between the role of St. Peter as an apostle and the concept of papal primacy. St. Peter’s apostleship was limited to the Jews, while St. Paul was entrusted with the mission to the Gentiles. St. Paul said, “The gospel for the uncircumcised had been committed to me, as the gospel for the circumcised was to Peter for He worked effectively in Peter for the apostleship to the circumcised also worked effectively in me toward the Gentiles” (Gal 2:7-8) The Lord said to St. Paul,

“Depart, for I will send you far from here to the Gentiles” (Acts 22:21) The Epistle to the Galatians reinforces this distinction, referring to St. Peter as the apostle to the circumcised and Paul as the apostle to the uncircumcised.

Catholics assert that the Roman pope became the successor of the Apostle Peter and received all rights and privileges from him as well. He, the pope, is the head of the whole Church, the vicar of Christ, the sole bearer for the whole visible Church of all her grace-filled rights; his voice in matters of faith. They believe that the Roman Church is the ‘Catholic’ Church and all local Churches (Coptic, Russian, Greek, etc.) should be part of this one Roman Catholic Church. The name ‘Roman Catholic’ is self-contradictory; how could it be ‘Catholic’ (Universal) and ‘Roman’ at the same time? In this dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, three elements stand out: 1) the teaching on the supremacy of the Apostle Peter, 2) on the supremacy of the pope and 3) on his infallibility.

The Orthodox Church also contests the notion of papal infallibility, asserting that the pope is not immune from error in matters of faith and doctrine. In 1054 AD, the East-West Schism occurred when the Pope of Rome and the Patriarch of Constantinople excommunicated each other, leading to a permanent division between the Roman Catholic and Orthodox Churches. This schism further solidified the doctrinal differences, including the issue of papal primacy and infallibility.

Limitation of Confirmation to the Bishop

In the early church, the Holy Spirit was believed to be given to believers through the laying on of hands by apostles or other church leaders. This practice is mentioned in several passages of the New Testament, including Acts 8:18, 1 Timothy 4:14, and 2 Timothy 1:6.

- “And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money” – Acts 8:18
- “Do not neglect the gift that is in you, which was given to you by prophecy with the laying on of the hands of the eldership.” – 1 Timothy 4:14
- “Therefore I remind you to stir up the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.” – 2 Timothy 1:6

The laying of the hands for the dwelling of the Holy Spirit is a specific rite of the Fathers the Apostles and their successors the Bishops, and as the regions of mission increased, consequently the number of believers and those who entered the faith increased. It was not possible for the Apostles to wander throughout all the countries and cities to lay hands on the baptized, so they established anointing by Myron as an alternative for laying hands for the Holy Spirit dwelling.

The first to make the Myron were the Fathers, the Apostles as they kept certain fragrant oils, which were on the Body of the Lord Jesus Christ during His burial, and they added spices brought by the women who prepared them to anoint the Lord, but He had risen. They melted all of this in pure olive oil, prayed on it in the Upper Room and made it a holy ointment to grant the Holy Spirit to the baptized. They decided that their successors the Bishops could renew the making of Myron whenever it was about to end, by the remainder of the original, so that it never finishes in Churches.

What specifically is the Myron (Chrism)? Myron is a Greek word, which means ointment or fragrant perfume. In the Coptic Orthodox Church it is a mixture of specific oils mixed with spices that were presented when the Lord Jesus Christ was shrouded. What is used today is the same as what was used in the Era of the Apostles. Truly our Church heritage has preserved many blessings that enrich our life and assist to secure our salvation in exactly the same manner as they did more than 2000 years ago.

The decree of Excommunication

In the year 1009, Pope Sergius IV of Rome made a fateful decision that would have far-reaching consequences for the Christian Church. He issued a confession of faith that included the filioque clause in the Nicene Creed. This addition to the Creed, which stated that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, was vehemently opposed by the Church of Constantinople.

In response, the Church of Constantinople removed the names of Pope Sergius and the Roman Church from their diptychs, the official list of sister churches and bishops commemorated in liturgical worship. This act symbolized a break in communion between the two churches. For over two centuries, the Roman Church resisted Germanic pressure to adopt the filioque. However, in 1014, during the coronation of Henry II as Holy Roman Emperor, the Roman Church finally used this addition to the Creed in public worship for the first time. This action further strained relations between Rome and Constantinople.

In 1054, Pope Leo IX sent a delegation of three men, Cardinal Humbert, Archbishop Frederick of Lorraine, and Bishop Peter of Amalfi, to Constantinople. Their mission was to deliver papal demands, including the return of the province of Illyricum to papal control. The delegation arrived in Constantinople with an air of superiority, viewing Patriarch Michael Cerularius as inferior to the Pope. This perception stemmed from the fact that in the West, the Pope wielded both temporal and spiritual power, unlike the Patriarch in Constantinople.

The papal legates' haughty attitude and demands infuriated Patriarch Michael. He refused to negotiate or compromise, leading to a deadlock in discussions. As tensions escalated, events took a dramatic turn. The Normans, a formidable force in Southern Italy, invaded Rome itself, capturing and imprisoning Pope Leo. News of this event traveled slowly, leaving the papal legates unaware of their diminished authority.

Despite the change in circumstances, the legates persisted in pressing their demands on Patriarch Michael. However, the Patriarch remained steadfast in his refusal. On July 16, 1054, while Patriarch Michael was celebrating the Divine Liturgy in the Cathedral of St. Sophia, the papal legates entered the church and placed a "Decree of Excommunication" on the altar itself. This act symbolized the formal excommunication of Patriarch Michael and the Eastern Church by the Roman Church.

In response, Patriarch Michael convened a council within days and excommunicated the papal legates in retaliation. The churches of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria sided with Constantinople, deepening the division between the Latin West and the Greek East. The year 1054 marked the beginning of the "Great Schism," a separation that would endure for nearly a thousand years. Despite hopes for reconciliation and compromise, the mutual excommunications between the Patriarch and the Pope proved to be a significant obstacle.

The Great Schism had profound implications for the Christian Church, shaping its history and contributing to theological and cultural differences between the Western and Eastern branches of Christianity.



Review Questions

1. What was the date of the Great Schism? (A. 1054)
2. True or False: The Great Schism, also known as the East-West Schism. (A. True)
3. What is the Great Schism? (A. was the break between the Eastern and Western Churches in the eleventh century)
4. What are the political causes for the Great Schism? (A. The fall of Rome - The rise of the Papacy)
5. What were the doctrinal reasons for the Schism? (A. The "filioque" and The supremacy of the Pope)
6. Why is the term filioque so significant? (A. It changes the balance of the three persons of the Holy Trinity.)

7. When was the first visit of a Coptic Pope to the Vatican? (A. In 1973 His Holiness made a historic visit to the Vatican and held a meeting with Pope Paul VI in which both popes signed a common declaration of faith in Christology and a commitment to Christian unity.)
8. Are there any current dialogues? (A. No. Currently the Coptic Church cuts theological dialogue with Catholic)The Great Schism occurred on July 16, 1054, marking a significant turning point in the history of Christianity.
9. True. The Great Schism, also known as the East-West Schism, refers to the split between the Eastern Orthodox Church and the Roman Catholic Church.
10. The Great Schism was the division of the Christian Church into Eastern and Western branches in the 11th century. It resulted in the establishment of two distinct ecclesiastical structures, each with its own unique traditions, practices, and theology.
11. Some of the political causes for the Great Schism include the fall of the Roman Empire and the rise of the Papacy. The fall of the Roman Empire led to a power vacuum in the West, which the Papacy sought to fill. This, in turn, led to tensions between the Eastern and Western Churches.
12. The doctrinal reasons for the Schism were primarily related to the "filioque" clause and the supremacy of the Pope. The "filioque" clause, which was added to the Nicene Creed in the West, stated that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, while the Eastern Church maintained that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father alone. Additionally, the Eastern Church rejected the claim of the Pope to universal jurisdiction over all Christians.
13. The term "filioque" is significant because it changes the balance of the three persons of the Holy Trinity. By stating that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, the "filioque" clause suggests that the Son is equal to the Father and the Holy Spirit, which is not in line with the Eastern Orthodox understanding of the Trinity.
- 14.

Books & References

1. ...



The Protestant Reformation

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

Timeline

Councils have played a pivotal role in the history of the Christian Church, serving as vital gatherings for leaders to address theological disputes, establish doctrinal unity, and provide guidance on matters of faith and practice. The early Church, in particular, saw the emergence of both local and ecumenical councils, each with distinct functions and significance. Before the rise of ecumenical councils, which brought together bishops from across the Christian world, local councils were the primary means of addressing regional issues and concerns. These councils, convened within specific geographical areas, provided a platform for bishops and other Church leaders to discuss matters of doctrine, discipline, and administration. While their decisions were not universally binding, they played a crucial role in maintaining unity and resolving disputes within local communities.

During the early centuries of Christianity, five major episcopal sees emerged as centers of influence and authority: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. These five sees, often referred to as the Pentarchy, held a special status due to their historical significance and apostolic connections.

- **Rome:** Rome emerged as a significant political force. Its bishops, later known as popes, gradually asserted their authority over doctrinal and disciplinary matters.
- **Constantinople:** Established as the new capital of the Roman Empire by Emperor Constantine, Constantinople quickly became a major center of Christianity. Its bishops wielded significant political and spiritual influence.
- **Alexandria:** Renowned for its catechetical school, Alexandria was a hub of intellectual and theological activity. Notable figures like Origen, Clement, and Athanasius contributed to the development of Christian thought.
- **Antioch:** As one of the earliest centers of Christianity, Antioch played a crucial role in the spread of the faith. Its bishops were instrumental in addressing doctrinal controversies and maintaining unity.
- **Jerusalem:** As the site of Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection, Jerusalem held a special place in the hearts of Christians. Its bishops, while often facing political challenges, were revered for their connection to the Holy Land.

As the Church expanded and faced new challenges, the need for broader gatherings became evident. Ecumenical councils, convened by the emperor and attended by bishops from across the Christian world, emerged as a means of addressing doctrinal disputes and establishing universal norms. These councils played a crucial role in defining Christian orthodoxy and combating heresy.

- **The Council of Nicaea (325 AD):** Convened by Emperor Constantine, this council addressed the Arian controversy, which denied the divinity of Jesus Christ. The Nicene Creed, formulated at this council, affirmed the belief in the Trinity and became a cornerstone of Christian doctrine.
- **The Council of Constantinople (381 AD):** This council reaffirmed the Nicene Creed and further elaborated on the doctrine of the Holy Spirit. It also addressed various heresies and disciplinary issues.
- **The Council of Ephesus (431 AD):** This council condemned Nestorianism, which taught that Jesus Christ had two distinct natures, human and divine. It affirmed the unity of Christ's person and the title "Theotokos" (Mother of God) for the Virgin Mary.
- **The Council of Chalcedon (451 AD):** This council addressed the Christological controversies surrounding the nature of Christ. It formulated the Chalcedonian Definition, which affirmed that Christ is one person with two natures, divine and human, united without confusion, change, division, or separation.

The purpose of these early ecumenical councils was to unify the Church and maintain its doctrinal integrity. However, the Chalcedon Council marked a significant turning point, as it led to the first major split within the Church. This council re-addressed the Christological controversies surrounding the nature of Christ. The Chalcedonian churches, which accepted the decisions of the council, emerged as distinct from the non-Chalcedonian churches, who rejected them.

At the time, there were no official designations such as Orthodox, Catholic, or Oriental. The non-Chalcedonian churches experienced minimal doctrinal changes after the Council of Ephesus, primarily focusing on ritual developments. In terms of dogma, teachings, and unity, the Oriental Church remained largely unchanged from its pre-Ephesus state.

In contrast, the Chalcedonian Church, particularly in the West, witnessed tensions between the Roman Church and the Church of Constantinople. The Roman Church gradually developed certain teachings and rituals that diverged from those of Constantinople. While this divergence was not immediately apparent, it eventually culminated in the Great Schism of 1054 AD, which resulted in the separation of the Western and Eastern branches of Christianity.

Leading up to the Great Schism

The Great Schism occurred as a result of a confluence of theological, political, and cultural factors. Central to the schism was the insertion of the Filioque clause (“and from the Son”) into the Nicene Creed by the Western Church. This alteration, which affirmed that the Holy Spirit proceeds from both the Father and the Son, was vehemently opposed by the Eastern Church, which maintained that the Holy Spirit proceeds solely from the Father.

The schism was further exacerbated by disputes in the Balkans, Southern Italy, and Sicily over ecclesiastical jurisdiction. The Western Church, led by the Pope in Rome, asserted its authority over these regions, while the Eastern Church, centered in Constantinople, resisted this encroachment. This conflict was particularly intense in Southern Italy, where Greek and Latin Christians coexisted uneasily.

Another point of contention was the designation of the Patriarch of Constantinople as the ecumenical patriarch, a title that implied a level of authority over all other patriarchs. The Pope in Rome, as the successor to Saint Peter, claimed primacy over the other patriarchs, including Constantinople. This claim was rejected by the Eastern Church, which viewed the patriarchs as equals.

Furthermore, liturgical practices in the West that differed from those in the East contributed to the growing estrangement between the two churches. For example, the Western Church’s use of unleavened bread for the Eucharist was seen by the Eastern Church as an innovation that deviated from traditional practice.

The rise of Islam in the 7th century also played a role in the Great Schism. As the patriarchates of Antioch, Jerusalem, and Alexandria came under Islamic rule, their influence within the Christian world diminished. This left the Patriarchates of Rome and Constantinople as the dominant forces in Christendom, intensifying their rivalry and contributing to the perception of a Rome-versus-Constantinople divide.

From 1054 AD to 1521 AD, the Catholic Church in the West grew in influence, strength, and financial resources. This growth was driven by various factors, including the expansion of papal authority, the Crusades, and the consolidation of ecclesiastical power. However, the fiscal demands imposed by certain clerical members, particularly the sale of indulgences, became a significant grievance that eventually contributed to the upcoming Protestant Reformation.

Martin Luther (1483-1546 AD)

Martin Luther, a pivotal figure in religious history, was born in Eisleben, Germany in 1483 AD. Initially pursuing a law degree, a severe thunderstorm triggered a profound change in him. Fearing for

his life, Luther vowed to become a monk if he survived. True to his promise, he entered the Augustinian order in 1505 AD.

Luther's theological journey began in 1507 AD when he commenced studying theology, culminating in a doctorate in 1512 AD. Meanwhile, the catholic church began practicing the sale of indulgences. In objection to the practice and considering it a form of corruption, Luther protested.

Indulgences, a contentious issue at the time, were viewed by the Roman Catholic Church as a means of remitting temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt had already been forgiven. This concept, however, faced significant criticism from Martin Luther. He argued that indulgences, particularly those granted by Johann Tetzel on behalf of the Catholic Church in exchange for money, undermined the true nature of repentance and forgiveness.

Tetzel's is famously quoted saying "As soon as the gold in the casket rings; the rescued soul to heaven springs". The quote refers to the ability to purchase heaven for your soul. While this sounds exaggerated, the Catholic church were in a dire state at the time. It is to be noted however, that indulgences remain a part of their church. In the Catechism website, it notes: "An indulgence is a remission before God of the temporal punishment due to sins whose guilt has already been forgiven, which the faithful Christian who is duly disposed gains under certain prescribed conditions through the action of the Church which, as the minister of redemption, dispenses and applies with authority the treasury of the satisfactions of Christ and the saints." Through an indulgence, "partial or plenary according as it removes either part or all of the temporal punishment due to sin," the faithful can gain indulgences for themselves or apply them to the dead." Even till this day an indulgence may be offered even for the dead! Today, the Catholic Church still accept the concept of the indulgences theologically, but warns from the misuse of them.

The abuse of indulgences, combined with the lack of availability of scripture for people to discern for themselves, prompted Luther to write the 95 Theses in the year 1517 AD. In this document he outlined his critiques of the teachings and practices of the Roman Catholic Church. In his writings, he emphasized the importance of genuine repentance and challenged the idea that indulgences could guarantee salvation. He also criticized the practice of selling indulgences to fund the construction of St. Peter's Basilica, arguing that true treasures lay in the Gospel of God's glory and grace. These theses were addressed to local archbishops and sparked widespread debate and controversy.

Additionally, Martin Luther's Ninety-Five Theses, posted on the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517, serving as a catalyst for the Protestant Reformation. Also addressed many practices and doctrines of the Catholic Church. Among the issues Luther addressed were:

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- **Clerical Celibacy:** Luther questioned the necessity and biblical basis for mandating that priests remain unmarried. He argued that priests should be free to marry if they chose.
 - **Papal Supremacy:** The Theses challenged the absolute authority of the Pope, suggesting that the Pope's power should be limited and subject to scrutiny by the Church and scripture.
 - **Purgatory:** Luther questioned the existence of purgatory, a state of temporary punishment after death for those who died in a state of grace but with unconfessed sins. He argued that there was no scriptural basis for this doctrine.
 - **Communion by Bread Alone:** The Catholic Church practiced communion with both bread and wine, but only the bread was offered to the laity. Luther argued for the restoration of the "cup" to the laity, emphasizing the importance of full participation in the sacrament.
 - **The Latin Bible:** Luther advocated for translating the Bible into vernacular languages, making it accessible to the common people. He believed that individuals should be able to read and interpret the Bible for themselves.
 - **Simony:** This practice involved the buying and selling of Church offices and indulgences. Luther condemned simony as a corrupt practice that undermined the spiritual integrity of the Church.

The Ninety-Five Theses ignited a theological and political firestorm across Europe. Luther's challenges to established Church doctrines and practices resonated with many who were dissatisfied with the Catholic Church's perceived corruption and abuses of power. The Reformation that followed led to the establishment of Protestant denominations and significantly altered the religious and political landscape of Europe.

Luther's theological convictions led him to hold a generally positive view of the Eastern Orthodox Church. He particularly appreciated their rejection of several practices he found objectionable in the Roman Catholic Church, such as clerical celibacy, papal supremacy, purgatory, indulgences, and communion by bread alone.

Lutherans recognize two sacraments (sometimes three): Baptism, Eucharist, and occasionally Confession. They believe in God's real presence in a specific way in each sacrament. Baptism, viewed as a "Means of Grace," symbolizes regeneration and rebirth through the "washing of regeneration." It is believed to forgive sins, deliver from death and the devil, and grant eternal salvation to all who believe, as declared by God's words and promises. Lutherans accept infant baptism.

The Eucharist holds a central place in Lutheran theology. They believe in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist, specifically referring to it as the True Body and Blood of Christ "in with and under the forms" of the offering. Confession and Absolution, often practiced privately before the Eucharist, involve the clergy offering absolution while maintaining strict confidentiality regarding the confessions.

Central to Luther's beliefs was the concept of Sola Scriptura, emphasizing the Bible as the sole infallible source of divine inspiration. He believed that the Bible should be accessible to all, regardless of their intelligence, and contains everything necessary for salvation.

Luther's understanding of salvation revolved around the principles of "Sola Gratia" (by grace alone) and "Sola Fide" (through faith alone). He maintained that humans cannot earn salvation through "good" works but solely rely on God's grace as a gift. According to Luther, salvation is entirely dependent on God's action (monergism), and humans do not possess free will in spiritual matters. He believed that those who place their trust solely in Christ can be assured of their salvation, whereas damnation results from unbelief, sin, and the rejection of forgiveness. Luther stressed that good works are the fruit of faith, and their absence indicates a lack of genuine faith. He rejected the notion that good works contribute to salvation.

Luther's actions led to him being declared a heretic in 1518 AD and excommunicated in 1520 AD. He also rebelled against monasticism, due to his unwilling strict experience, and proclaimed justification by faith alone. Most monks and nuns near where he was left their vocation. He married one of those ex-nuns Katherine Von Bora in 1525 AD.

Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531)

Ulrich Zwingli, another figure in the Protestant Reformation, emerged as a charismatic preacher and theologian in Zurich, Switzerland. Born in 1484, Zwingli's quest for spiritual renewal led him to challenge traditional Catholic practices, sparking controversies that would shape the course of religious history.

The first public controversy surrounding Zwingli's teachings erupted during the Lenten season of 1522. On the first fasting Sunday, March 9th, Zwingli and a group of followers intentionally broke the fasting rule by consuming smoked sausages. This act of defiance, known as the Wurstessen ("sausage-eating") incident, symbolized their rejection of external religious observances and rigid dietary restrictions.

Zwingli defended his actions in a sermon published as "Regarding the Choice and Freedom of Foods." He argued that the Bible did not impose universal food regulations and that transgressing such rules did not constitute sin. This bold stance challenged the prevailing notion of religious authority and paved the way for a more individualized understanding of faith.

Zwingli's influence continued to grow, and in 1525, he broke away from the Catholic Church, establishing a new religious community in Zurich. His teachings resonated with many Swiss cities, which adopted his ideas, leading to the spread of the Reformation throughout the region.

However, attempts to reconcile Zwingli's movement with the Lutheran Reformation, led by Martin Luther, proved unsuccessful. The Colloquy of Marburg in 1529, a gathering of Protestant leaders, failed to bridge the theological differences between the two reformers, particularly regarding the nature of the Eucharist.

Zwingli rejected several core Catholic beliefs, including fasting, clerical celibacy, veneration of saints, icons and statues, indulgences, excommunications, and the real presence of Christ in communion. He believed that the Eucharist was merely a symbolic representation of Christ's death, not an actual transformation of the bread and wine into his body and blood.

Zwingli's teachings and actions left an indelible mark on the Protestant Reformation, inspiring countless individuals to question traditional religious practices and seek a more 'personal' connection with God. His Reformation continues to shape contemporary Protestant thought and theology, influencing the development of various denominations that embrace his principles of simplicity, Scripture-based faith, and the rejection of external rituals.

John Calvin (1509-1564)

John Calvin, another pivotal figure in the Protestant Reformation, was born in France in 1509. His theological ideas and teachings had a profound impact on Christianity, particularly on the development of Calvinism. John Calvin's movement was motivated by his desire to reform the Christian church and return it to the simplicity of the early Christians. He believed that the church had added many rituals, garments, and festivals after the time of Jesus. Calvin's movement was also a response to the religious persecution of Protestants in 16th century France. Calvin's ideas were inspired by the writings of religious reformers like Luther, and he agreed with their core beliefs, such as the idea that Christians are reconciled to God by faith, not works.

In 1542 AD, Calvin published the Catechism of the Church of Geneva, a document outlining the beliefs and practices of the Reformed Church. This catechism played a significant role in shaping the doctrine and liturgy of many Protestant denominations. In 1548 AD, Calvin signed the Consensus Tigurinus, an agreement aimed at achieving unity among Protestant churches, primarily in Switzerland, regarding the sacraments. The Consensus sought to reconcile the differing views of Huldrych Zwingli and Martin Luther on the Eucharist.

Theologically, Calvin stood between the Lutheran view of Real Presence in the Eucharist and the Zwinglian view of pure symbolism. He believed that the Eucharist is a means of grace, with Christ actually present, but spiritually rather than bodily. This doctrine, known as "spiritual presence," emphasized the spiritual significance of the sacrament over its physical elements.

Calvin's teachings on grace and predestination were also central to his theology. He emphasized the sovereignty of God in salvation, arguing that individuals are saved by God's grace alone and that God has chosen some to be saved before the foundation of the world. These doctrines, while controversial, influenced many Protestant denominations and continue to be debated and discussed today. Calvin's emphasis on the sovereignty of God and the importance of grace in salvation resonated with many people. His writings, such as the Institutes of the Christian Religion, were widely read and translated into various languages, influencing theologians and believers across Europe.

Calvin's influence extended beyond Switzerland. Born in France, he sent many ministers there to teach Calvinism. These missionaries played a crucial role in spreading Calvinist ideas and practices in France, influencing the development of French Protestantism. Calvin's teachings extended beyond his lifetime. His ideas profoundly impacted the development of Protestantism, shaping the beliefs and practices of many Christian denominations such as the Baptist, the Church of Christ, the Presbyterian Church and the Reformed Church all with an emphasis on God's sovereignty, the importance of grace, and the spiritual significance of the sacraments.

King Henry VIII - Church of England | Anglican Church

King Henry VIII, the monarch of England from 1509 to 1547, played a pivotal role in the establishment of the Anglican Church, also known as the Church of England. His desire to annul his first marriage to Catherine of Aragon, which the Catholic Church refused to grant, led to a series of events that culminated in the English Reformation.

Driven by political considerations rather than theological disputes, Henry initiated the English Reformation and appointed himself as the Supreme Head of the Church of England, effectively breaking away from the authority of the Pope and the Catholic Church. This act marked the beginning of the Anglican Church as a separate and independent religious entity.

During his reign, Henry and his son, Edward VI, both held Protestant views and leaned towards Calvinism, which influenced the theology and liturgy of the Church of England. Archbishop Thomas Cranmer played a significant role in shaping the Protestant character of the church during Edward VI's

time. John Knox, a prominent preacher during Henry's reign, later became a disciple of Calvin and preached the Reformation in Scotland.

Queen Mary, who succeeded Edward VI, attempted to restore Catholicism in England. Known as "Bloody Mary" due to her persecution of Protestant heretics, she tried to reunite England with Rome. However, her efforts were unsuccessful as her half-sister, Elizabeth I, re-established Protestantism upon assuming the throne.

Queen Elizabeth's reign witnessed the further suppression of Catholicism and the strengthening of Protestantism. Calvinism appealed to many conformists, and Calvinist clergy occupied important positions within the Church of England. However, some dissatisfied Puritans sought more radical reforms, aligning with Continental Reformed churches.

King James I, who assumed the throne in 1603, was the son of Mary, Queen of Scots, and had been raised in a Presbyterian environment (a Calvinist movement). Influenced by John Knox, James was convinced of the Presbyterian church, which became the established church of Scotland. However, in England, he oversaw the production of the King James Bible, an influential English translation of the Bible.

Over time, the Anglican Church evolved, influenced by both Calvinist and traditional worship practices. It eventually navigated a middle ground between Lutheranism and Calvinism, reflecting the complex religious landscape of England.

The Anglican Church played a pivotal role in shaping the religious and cultural identity of England and later extended its influence to various parts of the world through the British Empire. Notable denominations born from the Anglican tradition include the Evangelical churches, The Episcopal Church, and the Methodist Church.

A Diverse Spread

Over the years, the Protestant Reformation continued to splinter and evolve, leading to a proliferation of denominations and theological perspectives. The initial divide between Lutheranism and Calvinism was just the beginning.

- **Calvinism:** This branch of Protestantism, inspired by the teachings of John Calvin, spread rapidly throughout Europe. However, it wasn't a monolithic movement. Different leaders and theologians within Calvinism emphasized various aspects of Calvin's theology, leading to the formation of distinct denominations. For instance, the Presbyterian Church, with its emphasis on church governance by elders,

- emerged as a prominent Calvinist denomination. The Reformed Church, another Calvinist offshoot, developed its own unique theological nuances.
- **Baptist and Church of Christ:** These denominations, while sharing some Calvinist theological leanings, developed their own distinctive practices and beliefs. The Baptist Church, for instance, emphasizes believer's baptism and congregational autonomy. The Church of Christ, on the other hand, emphasizes a return to the practices of the early Christian church.
 - **Anglicanism:** The Church of England, established by King Henry VIII, also underwent significant changes and divisions. While initially retaining many Catholic practices, the Anglican Church gradually embraced Protestant doctrines. However, the degree of reform varied, leading to internal tensions and the eventual formation of separate denominations. The Episcopal Church in the United States, for example, maintains a close connection to Anglican traditions while embracing a more inclusive and progressive approach. The Methodist Church, founded by John Wesley, emerged from within the Anglican Church but emphasized personal piety and social activism.
 - **Other Denominations:** The Pentecostal and Church of God movements, with their emphasis on the Holy Spirit and spiritual gifts, also trace their roots back to the Protestant Reformation. While not directly descended from either Calvinism or Anglicanism, they represent further expressions of the diverse and dynamic nature of Protestantism.

The ongoing fragmentation of Protestantism highlights the challenges of maintaining unity within a movement that values individual interpretation of scripture and personal religious experience. While these divisions have often led to conflict and discord, they have also contributed to a variety of theological perspectives and expressions of faith. The Reformation continues to impact the religious landscape of the world, and its movements can still be felt today in the diverse array of Protestant denominations that exist.



Review Questions

1. How many ecumenical councils were held? [There were four councils.]
2. What are the location and dates of the ecumenical councils? [Nicaea in 325 AD, Constantinople in 381 AD, Ephesus 431 AD and Chalcedon in 451 AD.]
3. What was accomplished during the Nicene Council? [The Creed was written and agreed upon by all 318 Bishops and Priests.]
4. At what point the church was split? [At the council of Chalcedon. The church was divided into Chalcedonian churches and non-Chalcedonian churches.]
5. Who was Martin Luther? [He was a monk. He left for monasticism in 1505 AD in strict Augustin order.]
6. What did Martin Luther publish to the local archbishops? [The 95 Theses detailed

Luther's opinions about the teachings of the Bible, and practices of the Roman Catholic Church.]

7. What are the different administrative structures? [Episcopal, Consistorial (assembly of leaders)/Synodical, Presbyterian (assembly of elders/priests), Congregationalist (self-governing congregations) (e.g. Lutheran Congregations in Mission for Christ)]
8. How did the Anglican church come about? [King Henry wanted to have his first marriage (to Catherine of Aragon) annulled which led him to initiate the English Reformation.]
9. Who founded the Baptist church? [The church was founded by John Smyth.]
10. How was the United Methodist church formed and when? [It is a merger between Methodist Church and Evangelical United Brethren Church in 1968 AD.] How many ecumenical councils were held?

Answer: There were four ecumenical councils: Nicaea in 325 AD, Constantinople in 381 AD, Ephesus 431 AD, and Chalcedon in 451 AD.

11. What are the locations and dates of the ecumenical councils?

Answer:

- a. Nicaea, 325 AD
- b. Constantinople, 381 AD
- c. Ephesus, 431 AD
- d. Chalcedon, 451 AD

12. What was accomplished during the Nicene Council?

Answer: During the Nicene Council, the Nicene Creed was written and agreed upon by all 318 Bishops and Priests in attendance. This creed is a statement of Christian faith that is still used in many churches today.

13. At what point was the church split?

Answer: The church was split at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 AD. The council condemned the teachings of Nestorius, who denied that Mary was the Mother of God. Nestorius' followers were excommunicated, and the church was divided into Chalcedonian churches and non-Chalcedonian churches.

14. Who was Martin Luther?

Answer: Martin Luther was a German monk and theologian who is widely considered to be one of the most influential figures in the Protestant Reformation. He was ordained as a Catholic priest in 1507, but he later grew disillusioned with the church's teachings and practices. In 1517, he published the 95 Theses, which outlined his objections to the church's sale of indulgences.

15. What did Martin Luther publish to the local archbishops?

Answer: Martin Luther published the 95 Theses to the local archbishops in Wittenberg, Germany, in 1517. The 95 Theses were a list of Luther's objections to the church's teachings and practices, particularly the sale of indulgences. The 95 Theses sparked the Protestant Reformation.

16. What are the different administrative structures?

Answer: The different administrative structures of Christian churches include:

- a. Episcopal: a church governed by bishops
- b. Consistorial (assembly of leaders)/Synodical: a church governed by an

assembly of leaders or a synod

c. Presbyterian (assembly of elders/priests): a church governed by an assembly of elders or priests

d. Congregationalist (self-governing congregations): a church in which each congregation is self-governing

17. How did the Anglican church come about?

Answer: The Anglican Church came about as a result of the English Reformation, which was initiated by King Henry VIII in the 16th century. Henry wanted to have his first marriage (to Catherine of Aragon) annulled, which led him to break with the Roman Catholic Church and establish the Church of England.

18. Who founded the Baptist church?

Answer: The Baptist church was founded by John Smyth, an English Separatist, in 1609. Smyth and his followers believed that the church should be composed of baptized believers only and that each congregation should be self-governing.

19. How was the United Methodist church formed and when?

Answer: The United Methodist Church was formed in 1968 AD as a merger between the Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church. The merger was the result of a long process of negotiation and discussion between the two denominations.

Canon Law History & Overview

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

What Are Canons?

The term "canon" originates from the Greek word "kanon," which translates to "rule" or "standard." Within the context of the Church, canons represent a set of generally accepted rules and regulations that guide ecclesiastical conduct and governance. Similar to how laws establish order and structure within a country, canons fulfill a comparable role for the Church. Canons are often reactive in nature, meaning they are typically formulated in response to specific historical events or issues that have arisen within the Church. By studying canons, one can gain valuable insights into past events and the challenges faced by the Church throughout history.

The necessity of church canons is evident when considering the need for a cohesive and organized community. Just as individuals must adhere to the laws of their country, or the rules to join a community in order to maintain order and harmony, members of the Church are expected to comply with its canons. By doing so, they demonstrate their commitment to the beliefs, values, and traditions of the Church. The comparison between hospital rules and church canons is illustrative. In a hospital, patients are required to follow specific regulations to ensure their well-being and the smooth functioning of the facility. Similarly, canons serve as guidelines for believers, helping to maintain discipline, unity, and spiritual growth within the Church.

The process of canon formation is guided by the Holy Spirit and involves thoughtful deliberation and collaboration among Church leaders. When an issue emerges, the Church, or more specifically, a Synod, gathers to discuss and address it. Through prayer, reflection, and discernment, a resolution is reached, and a new canon may be established to provide guidance and direction for future generations.

Overview of Canons

Theology	Rites (Liturgical Worship)	Clerical/Monastic Life & Lay People
Dealing with heresies.	On conditions for ordination, ranking, marital life, and priorities.	On prayer, fasting, and giving.
Dealing with persecution/persecutors - on those, (priests vs. paymen,) who were tortured/ imprisoned, and denied Christ.	Clerical excommunications, deprivations, and separations.	On safekeeping, partnership, extortion, buying/ trading, loans, and rentals.
	On baptism, feasts, deacon roles, (7 orders,) hourly prayers, etc.	On slavery, fortune tellers, etc.
"If anyone confesses that he is a Christian, he shall be put to death, without further trial, as a convicted enemy of mankind," (on Nero.)	On crossing oneself, prayer on the dead, etc.	On spiritual cleanness, (physical relations and struggles.)
	On the altar, church reverence, (speaking, prostrations,) kiss of peace, etc.	On abortion, homosexuality, and communion.

**Some of these canon subjects are by Awlaad Al-Assal, who is of a wealthy Coptic family who lived in the 13th century, AD The Church does not accept all the statements in the book but is looked at for historic record and information." There are canons of different types and subjects. This is one proposed breakdown to conceptualize.*

Theology

Theology encompasses a diverse array of canons that guide interactions with individuals who have engaged in heresies, partaken of heretical beliefs, or seek to return from their heretical ways. These canons also extend to situations involving persecution. However, a fundamental question arises: What transpires when an individual denies the faith? Does the process of returning to the faith differ depending on the circumstances surrounding the denial? For instance, consider an individual who denies the faith due to imprisonment but later recants their denial. How does this scenario compare to someone who denies the faith under torture and subsequently recants? Theologians and religious scholars have proposed varying responses to these complex questions.

Moreover, the canons address the actions of individuals who actively persecute others or proclaim heretical beliefs. These individuals pose a unique challenge to religious communities, as their actions can have far-reaching consequences. The canons provide a framework for discerning the appropriate response to such individuals, balancing the need for compassion and understanding with the imperative to uphold the integrity of the faith.

Theological discussions surrounding these issues often delve into the nature of faith, the role of free will, and the concept of repentance. Theologians consider the psychological and emotional

factors that might influence an individual's decision to deny or renounce their faith, seeking to understand the complexities of human nature and the potential for redemption.

Ritual/Liturgical Worship

In the liturgy, the deacon prays for the seven orders of the Church. Have you ever wondered what those seven orders are? The canons, which serve as the governing laws of the church, specify the seven orders within the church as dictated in the liturgy. These orders are:

1. **Bishop:** The highest-ranking member of the clergy, responsible for overseeing the spiritual and administrative aspects of a diocese or region.
2. **Presbyter:** Also known as a priest, responsible for leading worship services, administering sacraments, and providing spiritual guidance to the faithful.
3. **Deacon:** Assists the priest in liturgical functions and serves as a liaison between the clergy and the laity.
4. **Sub-deacon:** Assists the deacon in liturgical functions and prepares the altar for worship services.
5. **Reader:** Proclaims the scriptures during worship services and may also lead prayers and hymns.
6. **Chanter:** Leads the singing of hymns and other musical pieces during worship services.
7. **Doorkeeper:** Responsible for guarding the entrance of the church and ensuring that only authorized individuals enter.

The canons help clarify many rituals of worship. Regarding the eligibility of candidates for the priesthood, the canons specify that only men who meet certain criteria can be considered. One of the requirements is that the candidate must be unmarried or have been married only once. Therefore, someone who has been married twice would not be eligible for the priesthood.

The canons also address the issue of priests having side jobs for income purposes. While the canons do not explicitly prohibit priests from having secular employment, they strongly discourage it. A canon says that a priest should not have worldly dealings, what does this imply? Canons provide answers to questions such as these. The canons emphasize that priests should focus on their spiritual duties and that engaging in worldly pursuits could compromise their ability to serve the church effectively.

In terms of church reverence, the canons provide specific guidelines to ensure that worship services are conducted in a reverent and respectful manner. These guidelines include prohibitions on speaking during worship services and requirements for prostrations of reverence at certain points in the liturgy. Additionally, the canons outline various ecclesiastical punishments that can be imposed on

individuals who violate church laws or engage in inappropriate behaviors. These punishments include excommunication, deprivation of communion, and separation or suspension from the church.

People/Individual Oriented Canons

The canons serve as a guide for both clergy and the laity within the Church. For instance, fasting is a choice aimed at directing one's spiritual life and the canons underscore its significance and the manifold benefits it offers. The act of giving, its various forms, and the profound implications it carries are also emphasized within the canons.

Ibn Al Assal's writings offer a rich tapestry of insights into a variety of interactions and practices. It's important to note that his works sometimes include personal opinions, serving as valuable historical references rather than official canonical pronouncements.

The Church's stance on critical moral issues is unequivocal. Abortion is unequivocally condemned as an act of murder, and the canons impose corresponding consequences. Similarly, homosexuality is deemed contrary to the Church's teachings. These positions underscore the Church's long-standing commitment to upholding these moral principles, even in the face of shifting societal norms. The Church's teachings have consistently stood as a beacon, guiding its followers towards righteous conduct and spiritual growth.

The canons, therefore, play a pivotal role in shaping the spiritual and moral landscape for individuals within the Church. They provide a framework for understanding and practicing the faith, fostering a deeper connection with the divine and promoting a life of virtue and righteousness.

Canon Law vs Secular Law

Canon law and secular law are two distinct legal systems that govern different aspects of society. Canon law is the body of ecclesiastical laws and regulations that govern the Church, while secular law is the body of laws that govern civil society. But they also greatly differ in their sources, their goals, and their behavioral impact. Canon law is spiritual, leading to salvation. Secular law, on the other hand, aims for earthly order. The goal of canon law is to promote the salvation of souls and to maintain the unity and order of the Church. The goal of secular law is to maintain peace and order in society and to protect the rights of individuals.

Similarly, canon law governs the moral and spiritual conduct of believers, while secular law governs the external behavior of all citizens. Canon law may impose penalties such as excommunication or interdict - all with the objective of impacting the internal. Secular law may

impose penalties such as fines, imprisonment, or even death in order to direct conduct. The internal is not the objective as long as the law is followed.

The following table compares the key features of canon law and secular law:

Feature	Canon Law	Secular Law
Sources	Scriptures, Church Fathers, church councils, papal decrees	Constitutions, statutes, regulations, court decisions
Goals	Salvation of souls, unity and order of the Church	Peace and order in society, protection of rights
Behavioral Impact	Governs internal moral and spiritual conduct of Catholics	Governs external behavior of all citizens
Penalties	Excommunication, interdict	Fines, imprisonment, death

Canon Examples

Let us examine examples in the history of the Orthodox Church where canons were imposed. One notable example is Canon 58 attributed to St. Basil the Great, which deals with the penance for adultery. This canon illustrates the process of repentance and the importance of reverence toward the Holy Eucharist.

According to this canon, a person guilty of adultery is to be excluded from partaking in the Holy Communion for a period of fifteen years. “These fifteen years shall be allotted to him in the following manner, to wit: For four years he shall keep weeping; for five years, listening; for four years, kneeling; for two years, co-standing without the Holy Communion.” (St. Basil Canon 58) This exclusion is structured into four distinct phases:

1. **Four Years of Weeping:**

During this phase, the individual is expected to engage in deep sorrow and remorse for their actions. They are to lament their sin and seek forgiveness from God through prayer, fasting, and other forms of spiritual discipline.

2. **Five Years of Listening:**

In this phase, the person is to dedicate themselves to listening attentively to the teachings of the Church and the guidance of their spiritual father. They are to immerse themselves in the Holy Scriptures, the writings of the Church Fathers, and the lives of the saints to gain wisdom and understanding.

3. **Four Years of Kneeling:**

This phase involves physical prostration as a sign of humility and repentance. The individual is to kneel in prayer, asking for God's mercy and seeking His grace to overcome their weakness.

4. **Two Years of Co-standing without the Holy Communion:**

During this final phase, the person is allowed to stand alongside the faithful during the Divine Liturgy but is not permitted to receive Holy Communion. This serves as a reminder of their unworthiness and a motivation to continue their journey of repentance.

While Canon 58 may not be executed in such a manner today, it provides a structured path for repentance, it is important to recognize that each case is unique. What may be appropriate for one individual might not be suitable for another. The ultimate goal is always unity with God through reverence, discipline, and a sincere desire to turn away from sin and live a life in accordance with God's commandments.

In the case of St. Moses the Black, a notorious bandit, his journey to repentance and sainthood is a testament to God's boundless mercy and the transformative power of repentance. While Canon 58 might not have been applied verbatim in his case, the principles of repentance, humility, and spiritual discipline played a crucial role in his transformation.

The canons of the Church serve as valuable guidelines for spiritual growth and healing. They remind us of the importance of acknowledging our sins, seeking forgiveness, and turning away from them. By embracing the process of repentance and striving for unity with God, we can experience the transformative grace that leads to spiritual renewal and eternal life.

History of Canons, (the Holy Bible)

The roots of Canons, as we understand them today, stretch back to the very origins of Christianity. While the term "canon" itself might not have been explicitly used in the early Church, the concept was certainly present. The teachings and practices of Jesus Christ, as recorded in the New Testament, laid the groundwork for the development of a structured set of guidelines and principles.

The Levitical Canon, established in the Old Testament, provided a framework for religious observance and practice. However, it was the Scribes and Pharisees who, over time, developed a more rigid and legalistic interpretation of these laws. This interpretation often focused on external adherence to the letter of the law rather than its spirit.

In contrast to the Levitical Canon and the Scribes and Pharisees' application, the New Testament Canons were instituted by Jesus Christ himself. Christ's teachings and actions established a new set of guidelines and principles for his followers to follow. These canons were not explicitly declared or written down by the disciples but emerged organically as responses to specific situations and challenges. His teachings and actions served as a model for the early Christians, who sought to

follow in his footsteps. The apostles, guided by the Holy Spirit, continued to interpret and apply these teachings to the growing Christian community.

One notable example of this process is recorded in Acts 15. Faced with the issue of whether Gentile converts to Christianity should be required to follow Jewish dietary laws and customs, the early church leaders gathered in Jerusalem to discuss and resolve the matter. The result of this council was a decision that freed Gentile believers from the burden of observing Jewish ceremonial laws while affirming the importance of moral and ethical conduct. This decision, which was later communicated to the churches, can be seen as a canonical moment, establishing a new rule or guideline for the Christian community.

Moreover, Christ's teachings to his disciples, such as the command to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, can also be considered a canon. This directive provided a clear and authoritative framework for the disciples to carry out their mission of spreading the gospel.

Are Canons Necessary for Salvation?

In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus invites all who are weary and burdened to come to Him for rest and relief. "Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30) He offers His yoke, which represents His teachings and commandments, as a means to find peace and fulfillment. However, Jesus also emphasizes that this yoke is not intended to be oppressive or overwhelming, but rather gentle and light. He urges His followers to learn from Him, for He is humble and meek in heart.

The context of this passage is significant. Jesus was addressing the Scribes, a group of religious leaders who were known for their strict adherence to the Law of Moses. They believed that salvation could only be achieved through meticulous observance of all the regulations and rituals prescribed by the Law. However, Jesus challenges this notion, arguing that while the Law is important, it should not become the sole focus of religious practice.

Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30 suggest that the Scribes had lost sight of the true purpose of the Law. They had become so preoccupied with the external requirements and regulations that they had neglected the inner transformation and spiritual renewal that the Law was intended to promote. Jesus reminds them that the Law is a means to an end, not an end in itself.

Furthermore, Jesus' statement, "not leaving the others undone," signifies that He did not intend to abolish the Law but rather to reframe its significance. He emphasized the need for a holistic

approach to spirituality, one that balances the external requirements of the Law with the internal transformation of the heart.

Jesus' teaching in this passage underscores the importance of understanding the proper framework and thought process when it comes to religious observance. While the Law is essential, it should be approached with humility, gentleness, and a focus on the deeper spiritual principles that it embodies. Salvation, therefore, is not solely dependent on strict adherence to laws but rather on a genuine transformation of the heart and a personal relationship with Christ guided by the Law. "For the commandment is a lamp, And the law a light" (Proverbs 6:23 NKJV)

History of Canons, (Councils)

The Role of the Early Church Councils

As the Church expanded and encountered new challenges, the need for clear guidelines and unified practices became increasingly apparent. This led to the convening of Church Councils, where bishops and other Church leaders gathered to discuss and resolve doctrinal and practical issues. The Council of Jerusalem, described in Acts 15, is a prime example of this process. The council addressed the question of whether Gentile converts to Christianity needed to adhere to Jewish laws, such as circumcision. After much deliberation, the council reached a decision, guided by the Holy Spirit, that these laws were not necessary for salvation. This decision was communicated to the churches through a letter, which served as an early form of canonical guidance.

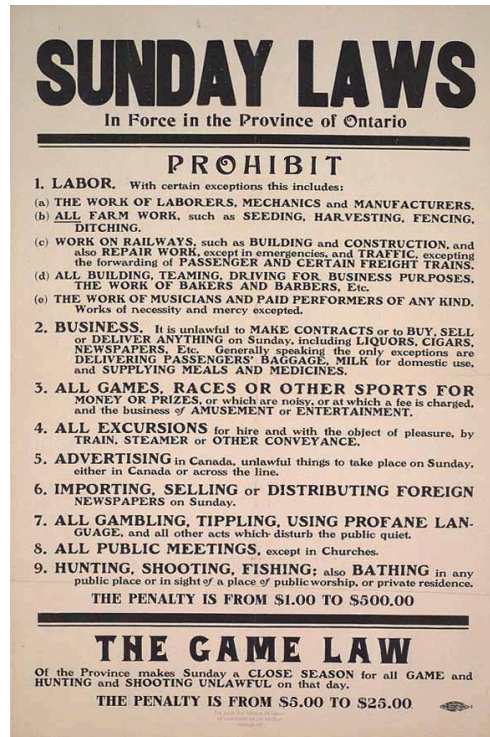
While the term "canon" was not explicitly used in these early councils, the decisions they made and the guidelines they established laid the foundation for the development of a more formal canon of Church law.

The Emergence of the Word "Canon"

The term "canon" itself, derived from the Greek word "kanon," meaning "rule" or "standard," began to be used more explicitly in the 4th century AD. The Council of Laodicea in 363 AD, for example, used the term to refer to the list of books that were considered to be part of the authoritative Scriptures. By the 5th century AD, the concept of a canon of Church law was well established. This canon encompassed a wide range of topics, including Church governance, liturgy, sacraments, and moral conduct. It provided a framework for the organization and functioning of the Church, as well as a guide for Christian living.

The Impact of Canons on Society

Throughout history, Canons have not only shaped the internal life of the Church but also exerted a significant influence on society as a whole. In many instances, Canon law served as a basis for the development of secular laws and legal systems. The "Blue Laws," mentioned in the original



text, are a clear example of this influence. These laws, which restricted certain activities on Sundays, were often rooted in the Church's teachings on the Sabbath day of rest. While the specific application of these laws varied across different regions and time periods, their underlying principles can be traced back to the Church's Canons.

Beyond the realm of law, Canons have also shaped social norms, values, and cultural practices. The Church's teachings on marriage, family, and social justice, for example, have profoundly influenced the development of Western civilization.

Consequences of Non-Compliance

A pertinent question arises: What happens when these canons are not upheld? Unlike secular laws, which are

enforced through a formal judicial system with prescribed punishments, the Church's approach to discipline is more nuanced. The responsibility of upholding the canons typically falls upon the bishop or priest, who acts more as a spiritual physician than a judge. The primary consequence for violating Church canons often involves restrictions on participation in the Eucharist, the central act of Christian worship. This is not intended as a punitive measure but rather as a remedial action aimed at guiding the individual back to spiritual health. It underscores the Church's understanding of its laws as tools for spiritual growth and healing rather than instruments of punishment.

While canons provide a framework for Church discipline, their application is not rigid or mechanical. A key aspect of the Church's approach is the emphasis on discernment and individual pastoral care. The final decision regarding the appropriate course of action for a believer who has transgressed the canons rests with the spiritual father or, in more serious cases, the ruling bishop of the diocese. This ensures that the response is tailored to the individual's circumstances and spiritual needs.

This raises another question: Is it necessary for the average layperson to be well-versed in the intricacies of Church canons? While a deep understanding of canon law is not expected of every

believer, a basic awareness of the Church's moral and disciplinary guidelines is beneficial. This enables individuals to participate more fully in the life of the Church and make informed decisions about their spiritual journey.

Some Interesting Scenarios

Imagine a woman is pregnant and wanting to be baptized. Is the child then considered baptized? This question was addressed by the Council of Neocaesarea in 315 AD. The Council's response was that the child is not automatically baptized simply because the mother is baptized. Rather, the child must undergo its own baptism when it is born.

Let us consider another scenario posed by St. Timothy of Alexandria. "Question: if a woman gives birth on Easter, does she have to fast, and not to drink any wine, or is she released from the fasting and from the obligation not to drink any wine, on account of her having given birth to a child?" The answer, he explains, is that fasting was devised in order to humble the body. If, therefore, the body is already in a state of humbleness and illness or weakness, the person ought to partake of as much as he or she may wish and be able to get along with food and drink. (St. Timothy of Alexandria)

What did the canon say about theft? According to one of the canons, a thief who voluntarily repents is excluded from Communion for 49 days, while a thief who has been detected and exposed is excluded for six months. However, if a person falls into the sin of fornication, the punishment is more severe. A monk or layman who has committed fornication is excluded from Communion for two years, provided they consent to submit to xerophagy (a strict fast) after the ninth hour and to do 250 metanias (prostrations). If they neglect to do so, they must fulfill the whole term of exclusion fixed by the Fathers.

These scenarios provide a glimpse into the complex and nuanced world of early Christian thought. They demonstrate that the early Church had a well-developed understanding of sin and repentance and that the punishments for sin were tailored to the specific circumstances of each case.

Fasting Wednesday and Friday

Fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays was clearly a significant practice observed by early church. From the canons we observe a variety of canons with regards to fasting. Wednesday is practiced to commemorate the day that Judas Iscariot, one of Jesus Christ's disciples, betrayed him, leading to his crucifixion. Friday, on the other hand, marks the day of Christ's crucifixion and death. By observing fasting on these days, believers honor and remember these significant events.

Fasting on Wednesdays and Fridays is not merely about abstaining from physical sustenance. It is a time for spiritual reflection, introspection, and self-purification. It provides an opportunity for individuals to examine their actions, thoughts, and intentions, seeking forgiveness for past sins and committing to a more righteous path. The act of fasting is seen as a way to humble oneself before God, acknowledging one's dependence on divine grace and mercy.

The canons on various occasions clarify and demonstrate the purpose, the exception and the mindset the Church maintains towards its practice:

- (Apostles 49): One who does not the holy forty (lent) , or Friday, or Wednesday he should be cut off unless he has a physical reason like sickness.
- 1. Fasting is to abstain from eating for a specified period as the law commands in obedience to Him who made the law. Fasting gives us the opportunity to examine our sins and reap our good rewards.
- 2. The purpose of fasting is to weaken the power of desire in order for the body to obey the spirit.
- 10. No abstention on Sundays or Saturdays.
- 21. If Wednesday or Friday is a feast, you go for prayer (liturgical) and communion and communion breaks the fast, so no abstaining.
- 23. A priest (clergy) who does not fast the lent and Wednesday and Friday should be excommunicated ('Youktaa') and the lay person who does likewise should be separated ('Youasaal') – Ibn El Assal

Finding the Canons

The canons help the individual understand and direct them towards a way of life that glorifies God. By studying the history, the response of the fathers, the impact of canons, one can try to acquire the mind of the father and live as our Lord intended us to. The canons can be found in the minutes of the three Ecumenical councils (Council of Nicaea (A.D. 325), Council of Constantinople (A.D. 381). Council of Ephesus (A.D. 431)), and by reading the canons of local councils such as: The Council of Carthage during Cyprian, The Regional Council of Ancyra, Council of Neocaesarea (AD 315) - Fathers of the Church, Synod of Gangra, Synod of Antioch in Encaeniis (A.D. 341), Synod of Laodicea (4th Century), Council of Sardica (A.D. 344), Council of Carthage (A.D. 419) as well as the Canons of the Holy Fathers. Saint Dionysius, St. Gregory of Neocaesarea, St. Peter, Archbishop of Alexandria, St. Athanasius the Great, St. Basil the Great, Canons of Saint Gregory of Nyssa, Saint Gregory the

Theologian, St. Timothy of Alexandria, Theophilus of Alexandria, St. Cyril of Alexandria all have canons to be read.



Review Questions

1. Recall the scenario of the pregnant woman presented by St. Timothy of Alexandria. (A: The moral of this scenario was that fasting was devised in order to humble the body, and if it is already in a state of humbleness and weakness, the person ought to partake of it as one is able to get along with food and drink.)
2. What is the exception for not fasting during Lent? (A: A physical affliction/ illness.)
3. What happens if one does not fast Wednesday or Friday? (A: They should be cut off unless they are an exception.)
4. What are the Blue Laws? (A: They are secular laws, stemming from canonical laws.)
5. What place does canon law have in the church? (A: It is extremely important, but within the right framework and thought process.)
6. True or false? The New Testament Canons were instituted by Christ. (A: True)
7. What are the seven orders of the church as dictated in the liturgy? (A: Bishop, presbyter, deacon, sub-deacon, reader, chanter, and doorkeeper, (laity.))
8. How do canon and secular law differ? (A: They differ in their sources, their goals, and their behavioral impact.)
9. What does the word canon mean? (A: 'Canon' in Greek means 'a rule' or 'standard'.)
10. Recall a canon from the Old Testament. (A: The Levitical Canon.)



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