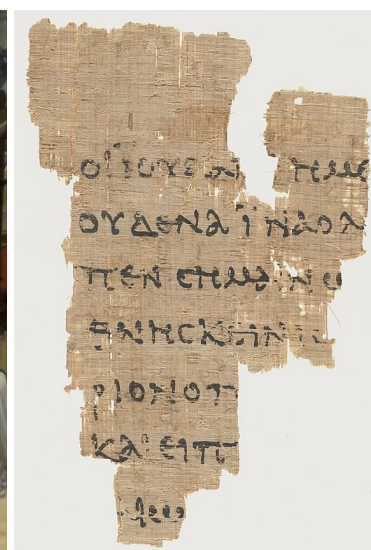
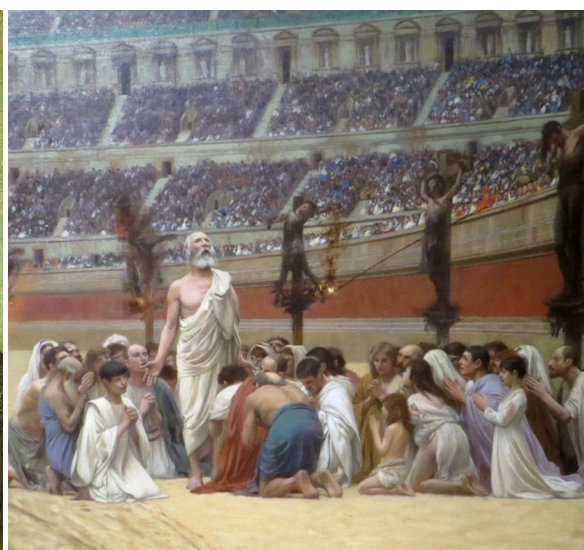


## **SAMPLE LESSONS**

# Introduction to CHRISTIAN HISTORY

*Brief outline and helpful resources surveying  
2,000 years of Christianity*

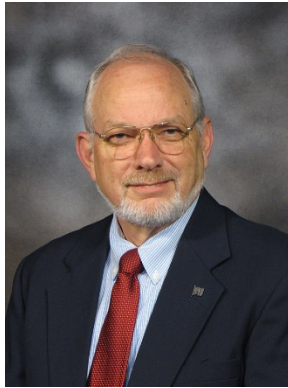


Richard Cravy

These notes are for the "Church History & Doctrine" classroom course  
taught at Sunset International Bible Institute

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**Richard Cravy** has been part of Sunset International Bible Institute since 1996. His education comes from Rice University in Houston, Texas and Florida College in Temple Terrace, Florida. He has served in ministry since 1970 with churches in Texas, Florida, Nevada and California. He retired in 2018 from the Tanglewood Church of Christ in Odessa, Texas after 18 years as the minister and an elder. With Sunset, he primarily works to help the school move forward in areas of technology. He also occasionally teaches in the Sunset two-year program and serves as a teacher in the adult education program of the Sunset Church of Christ. Starting in 2021 he began to oversee the Sunset Extension School program,

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# 1. Introduction to Christian History

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## INTRODUCTION:

- Most of us are poor students of history, including Christian or church history
- The study of history for many is something to be avoided if possible, and endured if unavoidable!
- Further, many presentations of Christian history by preachers and teachers are mostly negative, skewed, and inaccurate. Who would want to hear more of that?
- But I know that learning Christian history, now in class or later on your own, can be rewarding, enjoyable, expand your understanding, and enrich your teaching.
- Elements of Christian history are taking place around us all the time. Our biased news media still reports many examples. Here are a few recent ones:
  - Death of Billy Graham
  - 400-year anniversary of the King James Bible
  - Recent movies released: *Silence* by Martin Scorsese (2016), *Paul Apostle of Christ* (2018), *The Promise* (2016).
  - Repairing the Edicule in the Church of the Holy Sepulcher in Jerusalem (2017)
  - Division of the Ukraine and Russian Orthodox Churches (2019)
  - Mormon Church eliminating use of the name Mormon (2019)

## I. DEFINITION OF HISTORY

- A. A chronological record of significant events and an explanation of their causes and effects.
- B. The challenges:
  1. Incomplete records
  2. Significant? Causes? Effects? Explanations?

## II. GOD AT WORK IN HISTORY

- A. God is the Lord of History
  1. The Old Testament
  2. The New Testament
- B. Did God retire after that? Not according to the Book of Revelation!

- C. The prophecies of the OT and the promises of the NT indicate God's work was going to continue through all future human history.
  - 1. Genesis 12:3; Daniel 2:31-45; 7:13-14
  - 2. Matthew 16:18; 28:18-20; Revelation 7:9
  - 3. The Book of Revelation pictures the Church and Satan battling until Christ comes again to bring the final victory.
- D. Unlike the inspired historical records that make up the Old and New Testaments, the Holy Spirit has not chosen to reveal all that He and the Father and our Lord Jesus have been doing since the First Century.
- E. This is what I am confident of:
  - 1. The fundamental message of the Gospel has continued to be propagated throughout the world these last 1,900+ years – man's lostness in sin, the incarnation of Christ, His redeeming sacrifice on the cross, His resurrection, His reign now in heaven, His coming return, and the final judgment.
  - 2. The Word of God has been preserved, distributed and honored as the revelation of God.
  - 3. Countless men and women who have heard the gospel message, however imperfect the messengers, have been transformed.
- F. This is not an endorsement of all the many errors, misinterpretations, corruptions and even occasional atrocities which have happened over these many generations within the Christian family. I only affirm that God has still been at work despite the many failings of those wearing the name Christian.

### **III. WHY STUDY CHRISTIAN HISTORY**

- A. It is our family history, and, to one degree or another, a study of God at work through His Word to accomplish His purposes.
- B. Seems every author writing a church history book gives a list of reasons they believe we should study Christian history.
- C. Here are mine:
  - 1. Knowledge (versus ignorance)
  - 2. Understanding and insight
  - 3. Inspiration
  - 4. Empathy

5. Humility
6. Courage
7. Warning
8. Honesty

#### **IV. OUR SOURCES OF INFORMATION**

- A. Written sources – accounts by chroniclers (friend or foe), published letters and books by church leaders and scholars, quotations by later authors, official documents, etc.
- B. Unpublished sources and evidences – inscriptions, buildings, art, monuments, customs, ceremonies, holy days, etc.
- C. Problems and challenges inherent:
  1. Often limited to secondary (not original or primary) accounts or sources
  2. Too much, too little, and often inconsequential material. Time does not let us or the ancients choose what was preserved or discovered.
  3. History involves a lot of interpretation / opinion / assumptions / leaps of faith.
    - a) What is important or inconsequential
    - b) Effect of both chronicler's and researcher's point of view, bias and priorities
    - c) Often missing background and circumstances
    - d) Anachronisms – using modern concepts and cultural values to judge another time and culture
    - e) Turning assumption into fact
    - f) Accept that the "absence of evidence does not constitute evidence of absence" – that is only one possibility.
    - g) Be very careful in judging motives and be charitable in giving the benefit of the doubt.
- D. Always use trustworthy, well-documented reference materials from multiple sources. Some writings are generic, biased writings seeking only to "prove a point" or have an "axe to grind."

#### **V. METHODS & APPROACHES OF STUDY**

- A. Classic Timeline
- B. Within World History
- C. Specific Eras
- D. Geographical
- E. Departures and Heresies
- F. Revival, Reforms and Restorations
- G. Biographical
- H. Anecdotal (Stories)
- I. Topical
- J. Traditions – Orthodox, Eastern, Catholic, Reform, Protestant, Evangelical, Restoration
- K. Documentary
- L. Turning Points

## 2. Christianity in the First Century – AD 30-100

Richard Cravy

### INTRODUCTION

- We begin by taking a quick overview of 2,000 years of Christian history
- This view will tend to focus mostly on Christianity in the West – Europe and America
- Then we will narrow our focus to the First Century A.D.
- This was the "fullness of time" – Galatians 4:4; Mark 1:15; Luke 2:26; Acts 1:7; 2:23
- We will see Christianity's beginning is firmly rooted in history... and it is itself historical at its roots as well as in its expansion

### A BIG PICTURE TIMELINE

- A. Each historian seems to select slightly different key events and dates to mark the eras or divisions of church history. In truth, history seldom makes a complete turn in a moment or at a single event. But it often does start to change based on certain trigger points or sudden impactful events.
- B. Some often noted turning points:
1. Jesus' resurrection then Pentecost (Acts 1 & 2) – AD 29-30
  2. Death of Apostles Peter and Paul – AD 65-67
  3. Destruction of Jerusalem – AD 70
  4. Constantine becomes first Christian Emperor of Roman Empire – AD 311
  5. First church-wide Council of Nicaea – AD 325
  6. Gregory I becomes Pope – AD 590
  7. Mohammad declares himself God's prophet – AD 610
  8. Orthodox and Roman branches of Church officially divide – AD 1054
  9. Johannes Gutenberg prints the first Bible – AD 1455
  10. Martin Luther pens his 95 theses – AD 1517
  11. King James Version Bible printed – AD 1611
- C. Christian history by Eras according to Dr. Everett Ferguson (*Church History – Early and Medieval*)



## **1. AD 30 - 600 – The Ancient Era**

- a) 30 - 100 – New Testament Church
- b) 100 - 325 – Ante-Nicene Church
- c) 325 - 600 – Nicene and Post-Nicene Church

## **2. AD 600 - 1300 – The Medieval Era**

- a) 600 - 1050 – Church dominated by Temporal Powers
- b) 1050 - 1300 – Church and Temporal Powers dominated by the Papal Hierarchy

## **3. AD 1300 - 1650 – Renaissance and Reformation Era**

- a) 1300 - 1500 – Decay of Medieval Catholicism and Beginning of Reform
- b) 1500 - 1650 – Protestant Reformation

## **4. AD 1650 - Present – Modern Era**

- a) 1650 - 1790 – Protestant Orthodoxy and the Challenge of the "Age of Reason"
- b) 1790 - Present – Restoration Movement, Liberalism, Neo-Orthodoxy, Ecumenism, Post-Modernism

## **THE FULLNESS OF TIME**

- A. Mark 1:15; Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:26; Acts 1:7; 2:23, etc.
- B. The Roman World – Uniform law, peace, security, free intercourse across Empire, Roman roads
- C. The Greek World – Universal language, emphasis on knowledge
- D. The Jewish World – Monotheism, God at work in history, Scripture rooted in historical events, Messianic hope
- E. The State of Religion – Nature religions, Mystery religions, Traditional religions, Greek philosophies, State religion

## **FIRST-GENERATION TIMELINE**

- A. Births of John the Baptizer and Jesus (4 - 3 BC)
- B. Ministry of John (AD 24 – 27?)
- C. Ministry of Jesus + Death and Resurrection (AD 26 – 29)
- D. Pentecost and Church Begins (AD 29)
- E. Conversion of Saul of Tarsus (AD 33/34)

- F. Paul's public ministry & journeys (AD 44 – 59)
- G. Rome burns (AD 64)
- H. Apostles Peter and Paul executed in Rome (AD 65 – 67)
- I. Jerusalem and Temple destroyed by Roman armies (AD 66 – 70)
- J. Apostle John writes the Apocalypse (Revelation) (AD 90?)

## **OVERVIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED**

- A. Appeared at first to be a new sect of Judaism; but inclusion of more and more Gentiles, rejection of Jewish practices like circumcision and keeping the Law, persecution by mainstream Jews, and the condemnation of Israel's unbelief by the Apostles led to a clear distinction between the two groups.
- B. By the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, thriving Christian churches existed around the Mediterranean from at least Egypt around to Rome.
- C. The early church accepted the Jewish Scriptures as God's Word, to which was gradually added a new canon of sacred writings came into existence through the letters and books produced by Paul, Peter, John, Luke, Matthew, Mark, and more.
- D. A simple and local form of government developed for the many churches, consisting of elders, deacons and evangelists.

## **FIRST CENTURY ROMAN EMPERORS**

- A. Augustus Caesar (27 BC - AD 14): Adopted son of Julius Caesar; Augustus followed the lead of his father in granting the Jewish religion legal status, and keeping the Herodian family rulers over the province of Judaea. In AD 6, he removed Herod Archealaus and replaced him with a Roman prefect (governor).
- B. Tiberius Caesar (AD 14-37): Stepson of Augustus. Appointed Pontius Pilate as governor.
- C. Caligula (AD 37-41)
- D. Claudius (AD 41-54)
- E. Nero (AD 54-67)
- F. Three Emperors (AD 68-69): Galba, Otho, Vitellius
- G. Vespasian (AD 69-79)
- H. Titus (AD 79-81)

- I. Domitian (AD 81-96)
- J. Nerva (AD 96-98)
- K. Trajan (AD 98-117)

## **CHRISTIANITY'S BEGINNING FIRMLY ROOTED IN HISTORY**

- A. New Testament accurately describes or mentions many rulers, leaders, events, places, customs, etc.
- B. Outside sources make mention of both Jesus and Christians long before they were a major force in the Roman Empire.
- C. Copies of New Testament documents we have demonstrate that they were written early.
- D. Very early evidence of Christian's honoring certain places – Bethlehem grotto, Golgotha and Garden Tomb, Peter's house in Capernaum, Paul's grave in Rome.
- E. Distinctive Christian doctrines, practices and symbols appear in the earliest post-apostolic period, clearly indicating roots back in the First Century. Examples include: baptism, Lord's Supper, Cross, Resurrection, symbol of fish (ICHTHUS), and titles of Christ.

## **WHAT HAPPENED AFTER ACTS 28 (AD 64?)**

- A. Acts and the Epistles provide names of many cities where churches existed. A significant number will still be found in surviving Christian writings of the Second Century.
- B. Peter's Epistles and Jude reflect a significant persecution coming, or already taking place.
- C. Acts 28 ends with Paul under house arrest in Rome. We believe he was eventually set free, but was arrested again within two years. He was then detained in the Mamartine Prison in Rome until his execution under Nero. A similar end probably came to Peter about the same time.
- D. Revelation, Chapters 1-3 list seven churches in the region around Ephesus. Various problems in the churches show their struggle against false teachings and persecution. The author, the Apostle John, is himself exiled on the Island of Patmos off the coast of Ephesus as he writes. This period is commonly dated to the reign of Emperor Domitian.

E. A letter by Clement, an elder in the church at Rome, exists, dated to between AD 80 to 95. It was written to the church in Corinth, providing reproof and encouragement in dealing with leadership issues they were having.

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# **3. The Early Church – AD 100-313**

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## **THE CHURCH AT THE END OF THE FIRST CENTURY**

1. Predictions of New Testament writers
2. Seven churches of Asia in Revelation 2-3
3. Letter of First Clement – Clement of Rome to church in Corinth
4. Didache
5. Letters of Ignatius of Antioch (martyred AD 107 in Rome)

## **KEY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PERIOD AD 100-313**

1. Establishing the New Testament Canon
2. Cyclical periods of great persecution
3. Rise of great leaders
4. Dealing with heresies
5. Spreading the Faith
6. Changes in church leadership and practices
7. Increasing emphasis on apostolic churches and appointed leaders
8. Different views over the nature of Jesus will continue to disturb and divide the church until at least the AD 500s.

## **HISTORY IN THE ROMAN EMPIRE OF THIS PERIOD**

1. **AD 79** – Mt. Vesuvius destroys Pompeii and Herculaneum
2. **AD 81-96** – Emperor Domitian declares himself “Lord and God,” and makes worship of his deity a requirement. This leads to persecution of some early Christians.
3. **AD 98-117** – Sporadic persecution under Emperor Trajan, including by Pliny the Younger.
4. **AD 117-138** – Emperor Hadrian ceases conquests, and turns attention to unification, consolidation, and border defense of Empire. Declared that being a Christian was not sufficient reason to be punished unless a crime had been committed.

5. **AD 132-135** – Second Jewish Rebellion led by Simon Bar Kokhba causes massive casualties and a second destruction of Jerusalem.
6. **AD 161-180** – Last of the “Good Emperors,” Marcus Aurelius. Sporadic persecution.
7. **AD 180-192** – Emperor Commodus, one of the worst (think *Gladiator* movie).
8. **AD 193** – Utter turmoil as 5 different emperors reign in one year.
9. **AD 193** – From this point until AD 251, 16 of 17 emperors will die violently, either by assassination, murder, or in battle.
10. **AD 250-251** – Emperor Decius requires everyone except Jews to perform a sacrifice to the gods in the presence of a Roman magistrate; a *libellus* (certificate) was issued to all who complied. Those who refused, Christian or otherwise, were subject to death. Bishops in Rome, Antioch, and Alexandria were among the martyrs. Others, like Cyprian of Carthage, went into hiding.
11. **AD 257-258** – Emperor Valerian orders all Christians in government office to be stripped of their offices and property and those who would not sacrifice to the gods were to be executed. A general order to arrest and execute church bishops and deacons led to the death of Cyprian, the bishop of Rome, and all the deacons of the Rome church, among others.
12. **AD 284-285** – Emperor Diocletian divides the Empire into East and West (ruled by co-emperors) and purges the army of Christians.
13. **AD 303** – Diocletian together with his hand-picked successor Galerius orders an empire-wide persecution, executing of church clergy, and demanding sacrifice to the gods of all Christians under penalty of death. The emperor in the West was lackluster in his enforcement of the orders, while many in the Eastern church suffered greatly. This is often called the Great Persecution.
14. **AD 313** – Persecution stopped, and both the East and West Empires issued the Edict of Milan, or Edict of Toleration.
15. **AD 313** – Constantine, emperor in the West since AD 306, reunites the Empire and becomes the first Roman Emperor to profess the Christian faith.

#### **SUMMARY OF PERSECUTION from AD 64-313**

1. The post New Testament early church faced either sporadic or determined persecution through about half of this period.

2. “Out of the 54 emperors who ruled between AD 30 and 311, only about a dozen went out of their way to persecute Christians. It has been calculated that between the first persecution under Nero in 64 to the Edict of Milan in 313, Christians experienced 129 years of persecution and 120 years of toleration and peace.” – Dr. Everett Ferguson, “Did You Know?”, *Christian History Magazine*, Issue 27.
3. Because our historical records are so scant for this period, estimates of Christian deaths range from a few thousand up to 400,000 or more! What we do know is that many did die, and many more were tortured, imprisoned, disenfranchised, and otherwise mistreated on the basis of their refusal to abandon their faith.
4. Some of the most common charges against them included disloyalty to the state, being atheists (rejecting Roman gods), practicing cannibalism and incest, obstinacy, intolerance of other faiths, exclusivity, being antisocial, upsetting the social order, and dividing families.
5. I really recommend the *Christian History Magazine’s* issue on “Persecution in the Early Church” at [www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine](http://www.christianhistoryinstitute.org/magazine) and see issue #27.

## KEY CHURCH LEADERS

1. Connection of some early church leaders to Apostles:
  - a. Clement of Rome was said to have been taught by the Apostle Peter.
  - b. Ignatius of Antioch, Papias of Hierapolis and Polycarp of Smyrna were students of, and mentored by, the Apostle John in Ephesus.
  - c. Pothinus of Lyons (martyred AD 177) was sent to Lyons by Polycarp. After his death, Irenaeus (another student of Polycarp) took his place. Some believe Pothinus had also been a disciple of John.
2. **Ignatius of Antioch** – AD 107, martyred in Rome. Wrote several letters and advocated changes in the role of bishops. Made references to epistles of Paul.
3. **Polycarp of Smyrna** – AD 155, martyred while a bishop in Smyrna. Only a partial letter to the Philippians written by him now exists. In it he quotes apostolic writings. Later writers said Polycarp was taught by the Apostle John while a youth.
4. **Justin (the Martyr)** – AD 166. Born in Samaria, and schooled in Greek philosophy, he moved to Rome after his conversion and opened a school. He was denounced by the Roman cynic philosopher Crescens and executed along

with 6 of his students by the prefect of Rome. Parts of three of his works still exist, the best known being his *First Apology*.

5. **Irenaeus of Lyon** – AD 180 writes *Against Heresies*. Born in Smyrna and trained by Polycarp, moved to Gaul (France) where he was later appointed bishop after the previous bishop was martyred. His book was against a form of Gnosticism infiltrating the church in Gaul. In it he argues that Gnosticism was heresy and contradicted the apostolic writings, the traditions passed down through the bishops, and the decisions of the bishops. He identified the writings of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John as the only trustworthy accounts of Jesus. His leadership and writings were a major influence on the church in the West for several generations.
6. **Origen of Alexandria** – AD 185-254. A scholar and teacher of the Catechetical School of Alexandria, he combined Greek philosophy with Christian doctrine. Later moved to Caesarea Maritima where he was martyred. Known for his allegorical interpretation of scripture. He created an updated version of the Septuagint as well as commentaries on every book of the Bible.
7. **Cyprian of Carthage** – AD 200-258. Before his conversion Cyprian was an orator, lawyer, and teacher of rhetoric. As a believer he served first as a deacon then bishop of the church in Carthage, North Africa. He led the church through two severe persecutions, in which many fell away and received *libelli* for sacrificing to the gods. He adopted a moderate attitude toward those who sought to be restored, opposing those who followed the hard line of Novation in Rome. He fled and hid during the persecution of Decius but surrendered himself to execution later under Valerian. Many of his writings still exist.

## MAJOR HERESIES AND CONTROVERSIES

1. **Gnosticism** – derived from a combination of Greek philosophies and parts of several eastern “mystery” religions.
  - a. Presented Spirit as good, material and flesh as evil.
  - b. The ultimate God did not create anything material, nor can the material be reconciled to this God.
  - c. Many levels of Aeons, (demiurges or semi-gods) exist between the ultimate God and the god who created this universe.



- d. Secret knowledge (gnosis) is the only way for the human spirit trapped within material flesh to reach the ultimate God.
- e. There were many varieties of Gnosticism, including some which were intermixed with Judaism and others with Christianity. Recent discoveries of the Nag Hammadi documents reveal more about some of the Christian Gnostics. They re-interpreted Jesus and his teachings as part of the secret knowledge, but rejected his incarnation, resurrection, and sacrifice on the cross.
- f. At least some aspects of Gnosticism are already appearing in the New Testament, particularly in John, I John and perhaps I Corinthians.

## 2. **Marcionism** – AD 140

- a. Marcion was a wealthy merchant from Asia Minor, who became a member of the church in Rome about AD 140 and made a large contribution to the church. Because of his Gnostic teachings, he is expelled in AD 144 and his donation returned.
- b. He taught that the god of the Jewish Scriptures was a lower aeon or demiurge and not the true God. The Father of Jesus was the true God of love. Jesus only appeared to be in the flesh, and Marcion rejected a real birth, death and resurrection of Jesus.
- c. He compiled a canon of apostolic writings for his followers, including a heavily modified Gospel of Luke plus an edited version of 10 of Paul's letters.
- d. After his return to Asia Minor, he was successful in establishing a number of churches which followed his Gnostic gospel and his movement continued for several centuries.

## 3. **Montanism** – AD 156

- a. Often called "The New Prophets" movement. A group of three in Phrygia began to claim direct guidance by the Holy Spirit with new revelations through ecstatic utterances. Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla called for an ascetic lifestyle and awaited the imminent second coming of Christ.
- b. Their teachings and practices soon spread as far as Rome, Gaul, and Carthage. It often divided churches as bishops rejected their teachings.
- c. Many believers were attracted to the movement because of its emphasis on a more austere lifestyle and belief in the immediate work of the Spirit of

God in their lives. One of the most famous defenders of the Montanists was Tertullian around AD 207, though Tertullian never formally joined the movement. The last churches of Montanists disappeared in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century.

#### 4. **Easter**

- a. It is not certain when early Christians first marked one specific day each year to commemorate the Resurrection of Christ.
- b. Scholars believe that in the First Century the tomb at Jerusalem became a kind of memorial for believers in that region, prompting Emperor Hadrian to bury it beneath a Temple to Venus built after the Bar Kokhba Revolt (Second Jewish War) of AD 132-135.
- c. Polycarp of Smyrna met with Anicetus, bishop of Rome, about AD 155 to discuss the proper date. Polycarp and those in the East celebrated according to the Jewish calendar, on the third day after Passover. The Roman and Alexandrian churches celebrated the Sunday following the Jewish Passover date.
- d. In AD 190, Bishop Victor of Rome sent out a letter excommunicating all who did not follow the Roman practice, but it was later rescinded.
- e. At the Council of Nicaea in AD 325 guidelines were agreed upon for the proper date, but differences continue to exist even today between different parts of the church.

#### 5. **Novation & Donatus**

- a. Novation was a Bishop of Rome during part of the persecutions under Decius and Valerius in the AD 250s. He banned those who had obtained *libelli* from being reconciled to the church, even if they repented. Some had purchased counterfeit *libelli* while others had actually sacrificed to the gods out of fear.
- b. He was opposed most strongly by Cyprian in Carthage, who was more moderate in his acceptance back into fellowship those who had fallen away, provided they showed adequate evidence of repentance together with prayer and fasting.
- c. A second controversy arose over church leaders, particularly bishops, who fell away during the later Great Persecution of Diocletian. Donatus, then Bishop of Carthage, argued that bishops who fell away during persecution or surrendered copies of the Scriptures to the Roman authorities, could not

- later return to leadership, even if they repented and were reconciled to the church.
- d. According to those who followed Donatus, any baptism, ordination, consecration, communion, wedding or worship service conducted by these *traditores* was invalid, and those who received these services had not received legitimate sacraments.
  - e. Some extremists argued that any services rendered by these bishops before their falling away were also invalid, believing they were never truly converted!
  - f. Most of the church in North Africa was separated from the Roman church for several generations over these issues. Reconciliation gradually occurred sometime after the death of Donatus in AD 355.
6. **Arianism** sprang from the teaching of Arius, an Alexandrian businessman. It denied the true deity of Christ, presenting Him as God's first creation. Beginning about AD 300 it divided churches all across the Empire. We will talk about it more in our next lesson.

## CHANGES IN THE CHURCH

1. **Organization** – In the New Testament: a plurality of elders overseeing a single congregation, with deacons serving with them. With the passing of the Apostles and first generation of Evangelists, there was no leadership structure above the local churches.
  - a. AD 112 – Ignatius speaks in his letters of a single bishop being over the other elders within the congregation. Whether this was already a common practice, or only a change he was advocating, we do not know.
  - b. AD 156 – Polycarp at his martyrdom is referred to as “the” bishop of Smyrna.
  - c. AD c.180 – Irenaeus speaks of churches which were founded by Apostles as “the depository of apostolic tradition,” pushing forward the concept of apostolic succession.
  - d. AD c.225 – Hippolytus of Rome writes that only the bishop could confer ecclesiastical office through ordination in his *Apostolic Tradition*.

- e. AD c.250 – Cyprian of Carthage speaks of bishops as “priests” as they administer the Eucharist (as a “sacrifice”) and re-admit penitents. He further writes, “If anyone is not with the bishop, he is not in the church.”
- f. AD c.300 – Ranks of bishops have appeared:
  - i. Lowest: bishops of country churches
  - ii. City bishops
  - iii. Metropolitan bishops in capital cities, served as president at provincial synods and ordained the bishops in their provinces.
  - iv. Patriarchs – Bishops of the five major cities of Empire, each overseeing all the churches and bishops in their region: Rome, Constantinople, Alexandria, Antioch, and Jerusalem. These men, because of their fatherly oversight of their spiritual families, were called *papas* (Latin term of endearment for “father”).

## 2. Worship

- a. **Celebration of Easter** – a specific annual day celebrating the resurrection of Jesus not mentioned in the New Testament. However, the resurrection was implicit in the First Century practices of meeting on Sunday, baptism, and the Lord’s Supper. For changes, see the section on Easter above.
- b. **Lord’s Supper**
  - i. AD c.180 – Irenaeus refers to “the real presence of Christ” in the Supper.
  - ii. AD c.250 – Cyprian: Eucharist is a “sacrifice” offered by the bishop/priest and can only be administered by him.
- c. **Baptism** – in New Testament was immersion upon confession of faith. The one who administered was not emphasized.
  - i. AD c.110 in Didache – pouring of water only if immersion not possible.
  - ii. AD c.200 – Tertullian speaks of triple immersion; he specifically opposes baptism of infants.
  - iii. AD c.250 – Cyprian approves of baptism of infants and small children, and of baptism by pouring water on those on their sickbed.