





# Church History

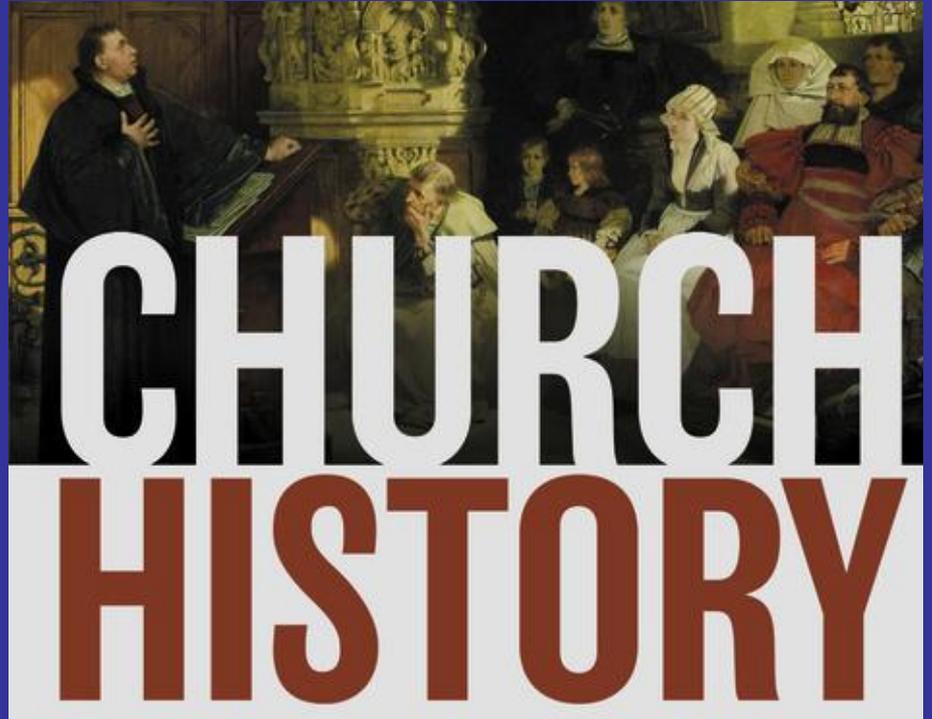
# The Value of Studying Uninspired History

- See N.T. Prophecy fulfilled. (Matt. 24; 1 Tim. 4:1-5; Rev.)
- Find an explanation for many things practiced in religion that are not in scripture.
- Learn the origin of where the denominations.
- Learn the dangers of deviation from God's plan.
- Learn the benefits of faithfulness to God's plan.

**One lesson to be learned from both inspired and uninspired history – peace, prosperity & popularity tend to produce apostasy!**

# Periods of Church history

1. **First Century**
2. **Falling Away**
3. **Dark Ages**
4. **Reformation**
5. **Restoration**
  - **Primitivism**
  - **Replication**
  - **Replanting**



# Differences – Synagogue & Temple

## Synagogue

- In various localities
- No clergy/laity distinction
- No special dress
- No animal sacrifices
- No incense
- No holy water
- Sermons
- Singing without instruments
- Relatively plain buildings

## Temple

- Only in Jerusalem
- Priests & people
- Priests had special garments
- Sacrifices featured
- Incense
- Holy water
- Sermons
- Various musical instruments
- Ornate buildings

Temple – All these things are *typical* and were intended to pass away! (John 4:19-24; Hebrews 8:2; 9:24)

***“On this rock I will build my church.”***

**Matthew 16:18**

## **Tendency to leave the right way:**

- **In the Old Testament**
  - Adam & Eve
  - Tower of Babel after flood
  - Golden calf at Sinai
  - 1 Kings 11:4-6
- **Predictions in the New Testament that some would leave the right way**
  - Acts 20:29-32
  - 2 Thessalonians 2:1-4
  - 1 Timothy 4:1-3
  - 2 Timothy 4:1-4

# The Universal Church



**People!**

# Local Churches

God intended  
local churches  
to be:  
**Independent**  
**Autonomous**  
**Sufficient**



# International Standard Bible Encyclopedia

There were two clearly distinct offices of a local and permanent kind in the New Testament churches. Paul (Phil. 1:1) addresses “all the saints that are at Philippi with the bishops and deacons ... They exercised the highest ecclesiastical functions:

1. They had control of membership
2. They selected their officers and other servants
3. They observed the ordinances.

**Autonomous**

There is in the New Testament **no warrant** for ecclesiastical grades in the ministry of the churches by which there can be created **an ascending series** to govern the churches merged into **one vast ecclesiastical organization** called “the **church.**” ... We may see, on the contrary, that to each local church has been committed by Christ the **management of its own affairs**; and that He had endowed every such church **with ecclesiastical competency**, to perform every function that any ecclesiastical body has a right to perform.

**Independent**

**Sufficient**

# Falling Away

Predicted and begun in N.T. period – this lesson cover 250 years after Apostles

1. Formation of the Canon
2. Heresies and sects developed
3. Voluminous writing by Christians
4. Persecution
5. Developing Hierarchy
6. Subsequent Changes

# #1 – Formation of Canon

- Apostles wrote acknowledged books.
- Men associated with apostles wrote books recognized as authoritative – these were exchanged by local churches. (Colossians 4:16)
- False teachers wrote letters claiming they were from apostles. (2 Thessalonians 2:2)
- Various brethren listed accepted books – gradually these lists became uniform.

# #2 – Heresies and Sects

(Roots of some seen in N.T.)

- Marcion (born 85 AD – wrote in 150)
- Gnosticism
- Docetism
- Montanism
- Later controversies arose regarding the deity of Christ and the free-will of man that proved to be very divisive (more on this later)

# #3 – Voluminous Writings by Christians

## Christian Writers 100-150

- Clement of Rome
- Ignatius of Antioch
- The Didache
- Papias
- Polycarp
- Shepherd of Hermas

**\*Shows little change  
from N.T. pattern**

## Apologists 185-250

- Quadratus
- Aristides
- Justin Martyr
- Tatian
- Melito
- Athenagoras
- Theophilus

# #4 – Persecution

- First by Jews; Romans tolerated them as Jews
- As Gentiles increased, Romans were frustrated because no headquarters to hold responsible

- Chief persecutions:

- Nero (54-68)
- Domitian (84-96)
- Trajan (98-117)
- Maximinus (235-238)
- Decius (249-251)
- Diocletian (303-305)

Galerius issued  
Edict of Toleration (311)

Constantine issued  
Edict of Milan (313)  
Encouraging Christians

**Prosperity was more harmful  
than persecution!**

# Why Were Christians Persecuted?

- They were loyal first to God and then to the State
- They were viewed as unpatriotic
- They would not sacrifice to the false gods or idols
- They were threats to some businesses
- Some resented their pure moral lives  
(1 Peter 4:3-4)

# #5 – Developing Hierarchy

- **Elders**

- Also called bishops and shepherds (Acts 20:17,28)
- Always plural
- Equal in authority
- Only authority was expediting instructions in scripture (Acts 20:32; Titus 1:9)
- Authority only in one church (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2)

- **Deacons (Philippians 1:1)**

- Servants
- No general authority

**In  
The  
Beginning**

# #5 – Developing Hierarchy

- One elder – permanent chairman of elders (the “*Bishop*”)
- Distinction between clergy and laity
- Clergy considered priests, mediating for the laity
- Necessity for clergy to ordain clergy
- Established a chain of authority from man to man
- Small churches looked to bishops in the larger churches
- Result: one bishop would be over several churches
- Bishops met together to discuss doctrinal differences
- Someone had to preside; called “*Metropolitan Bishop*”
- At first, they claimed to represent their churches
- Eventually claimed authority from Christ thru the apostles

**By the  
End of the  
1<sup>st</sup> Century**

# #5 – Developing Hierarchy

- Emperor was now a friend of the church
  - He ordered church buildings returned
  - Funded new elaborate buildings
  - Gave money to bishops for ministers
  - Ordered public servants to rest on Sunday
- He was concerned for its unity
  - A dispute arose re: the nature of Christ
  - He convened all bishops in Nicea to settle it
  - Constantine was the chairman
  - Result was Nicene Creed (325 A.D.)

**Subsequent  
Changes  
(by the 4<sup>th</sup>  
century)**

“During a great part of this (2nd) century, all the churches continued to be, as at first, independent of each other, or were connected by no consociations or confederations. (1) Each church was a kind of small independent republic, governing itself by its own laws, enacted or at least sanctioned by the people. But in the process of time, it became customary for all the Christian churches within the same province, to unite and federate in the manner of confederated states, and in this manner of confederated states, they have since their first deliberations, in the same manner as custom first arose among the states of Europe, and the consequent confederations, and the laws agreed upon in them were called canons. afterwards the utility of the thing being seen, the custom extended through all countries where there were Christian churches. (2) Such conventions of delegates from several churches assembled for deliberation were called by the Greeks Synods, and by the Latins Councils; and the laws agreed upon in them were called canons. These councils, - of which no vestige appears before the middle of the fourth century, changed nearly the whole form of the church.” **(Johann Lorenz Mosheim)**

**Indeed – The whole form of the church was changed!**

“These councils, - of which no vestige appears before the middle of this century, **changed nearly the whole form of the church.**”

**(Mosheim)**

- It was no longer made up of individuals associated in scattered independent, autonomous, self-sufficient local assemblies
- It was no longer persecuted by worldly government
- No longer was Christ its only head **(Col. 1:18)**
- No longer governed only by the *“apostle’s teaching”*
- It was now a huge organization of churches with a growing hierarchy of officers resembling the Roman Empire itself
- Now it was befriended by worldly government
- Now it had a Roman emperor exercising control
- Now it had a legislative body to decide its doctrine

**“The increase of heresy led the bishops to desire more centralization of authority and a set pattern of doctrine. The New Testament was recognized as authoritative, but they believe it needed an authoritarian interpretation. After the development of the episcopacy, the church had an organization which could demand conformity. The bishops became the spokesmen of orthodoxy and officially representatives of the organism. They developed and enlarged the rule of faith. Their interpretations began to crystalize, and from the beginning of the sixth century, there was a pattern of doctrine designated as “Catholic.” (F.W. Mattox, *The Eternal Kingdom*, p. 149)**

# #6 – There Was Now Another Authority To Authorize Changes!

## Worship

- Candles (300 A.D.)
- Images (375 A.D.)
- Veneration of dead saints (375 A.D.)
- Infant Baptism (400 A.D.)
- Special clothing (vestments) for priests (500 A.D.)
- Instrumental music (670 A.D.)
- Rosary (1090 A.D.)
- Transubstantiation (1215 A.D.)

# #6 – There Was Now Another Authority To Authorize Changes!

## Doctrine

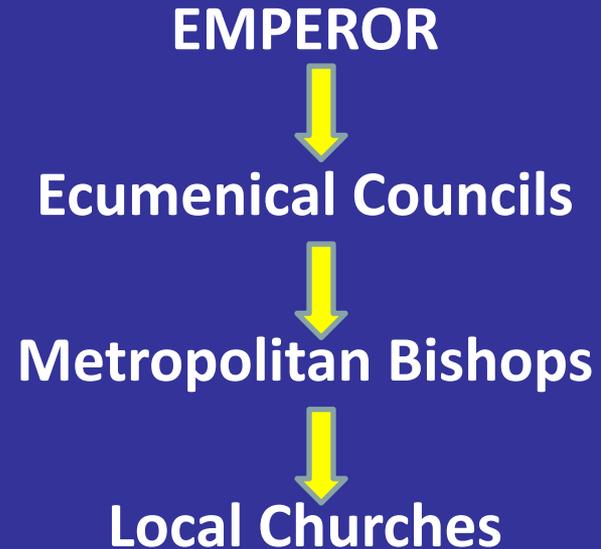
- Original sin (300-400 A.D.)
- Purgatory (593 A.D.)
- Celibacy demanded (1079 A.D.)
- Confession to priests demanded (1215 A.D.)
- Bible prohibited for common people (1215 A.D.)
- Papal infallibility (1870 A.D.)

# #6 – There Was Now Another Authority To Authorize Changes!

## Local Churches

1. Operating now under new authority
2. No longer autonomous
3. No longer independent
4. No longer sufficient

Any little groups of Christians who didn't go along with all of this were the Lord's Church!





# Church History

