

History of the Catholic Church - Notes

Lesson 1 - Setting the Stage...

Location: Palestine 0 CE

- Who was in charge?
 - Roman Empire
 - Caesar Augustus (31 BCE – 14 CE)
- What religion were the Romans?
 - Pagan (polytheists)
- What was the predominant religion of the people of Palestine?
 - Jewish (monotheists)

The Messiah

- How did Christianity arise from Judaism?
 - Short answer: Jesus
- Christians believe Jesus was the **Messiah** (or savior) foretold by Jewish prophets
- How do we know about Jesus?
 - Bible – written by...
 - Jesus' followers (example: Gospels)
 - Historical record

Jesus as a Historical Figure

- Born when?
 - Approximately 4 BCE
- Born where?
 - Bethlehem
- Spoke what language?
 - Aramaic
- Grew up where?
 - Nazareth
- Crucified when?
 - Approximately 30 CE
- Crucified where?
 - Jerusalem
- Gospels = “good news”
- Who were they?
 - Matthew
 - Mark
 - Luke
 - John
- When were they written?
 - 70-90 CE
- Who were they written by?
 - Followers of Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
 - They recorded the oral tradition

Lesson 2 – The Life of Jesus

- Birth
 - Born in Bethlehem
 - around 4 BCE
- Then...
 - The Gospels don't say much until his Baptism
- **Baptism** of Jesus (Age: 30?)
 - Baptized by:
 - John the Baptist in the Jordan River
 - Luke starts his Gospel with an account of John the Baptist
 - **Holy Spirit** – “This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased.”
- Jesus' Ministry (Public Life) – Lasts 3 years
 - When Jesus started teaching
 - Gained a following of disciples
 - Gospels describe Miracles
 - **Parables:** stories with an important message
 - Simple message:
 “Love God, Love Others”

Disciples:

- Followers of Jesus
- “Spiritual Apprentices”

Apostles:

- Closest Disciples
- 12 at the Last Supper

During His Ministry

- Jesus spoke out against the strict Pharisees and was referred to as the Son of God
- The Jewish Sanhedrin (Council) saw Him as a threat to stability in Palestine

Jesus' Arrest (Age: approximately 33)

- Jerusalem for Passover (Palm Sunday)
- **Last Supper** – with 12 **apostles**
- Captured in Garden
- Accused of blasphemy by Sanhedrin
- Pontius Pilate gave into wishes of the crowd

Crucifixion (Approx. 30 CE)

- Common method of execution
- Jesus died on the cross for our sins
- Golgotha (Place of the Skull)
- Now: *Church of the Holy Sepulchre*

Resurrection

- After 3 days, disciples found that Jesus' tomb was empty
- **Resurrection:** raised from the dead

Ascension

- 40 days after resurrection, Jesus ascended into heaven

Pentecost

- 50 days after Easter, the Holy Spirit visited the apostles and gave them gifts to spread the word of Christ

Early Christians

- Word of Jesus spread around the Roman Empire (Documented in **Acts**)
- Many of the first Christians were actually Jewish
- **Gentiles** - Non-Jews or Christians
- In Greece:
 - The Messiah translates as “Christos”
 - St. Paul

St. Paul

- From Greece, born Saul
 - “Converted” from Judaism after hearing about Jesus’ teaching
 - Believed that the teachings of Jesus should replace the “Old Law” of Moses
 - Travelled around the Roman Empire...
 - Appears prominently in the New Testament
 - Acts of the Apostles
 - Letters of Paul to the _____
 - Martyred by Emperor Nero in Rome in 67 CE
- “The second most important person in Christianity”
- Became an honorary Apostle, “Apostle to the Gentiles”

Lesson 3 - The Early Church

The Early Church (30-313 CE)

Pentecost (about 30 CE)

- “The birth of the Catholic Church”

Practicing in the Early Church, some definitions

- **Evangelization** - Apostles spread the Good News
- **Liturgy** - Gather to ‘break the bread’
- **Service** – Help those in need
- New converts were Baptized
 - **Bishop** - leaders of a group of churches or territories

The Council of Jerusalem (51 CE)

- Apostles meet
- Paul and Peter fought to separate Jesus’ teachings from those of the Jewish tradition
- New belief that gentiles would be purified by their faith
- Christians freed from obligations of circumcision, dietary laws and ceremonial washing

Persecution of Catholics in Rome

- Fire destroyed half of Rome (64 CE)
- Emperor Nero blamed Christians
- Peter and Paul were subsequently martyred

St. Peter

- Originally Simon
- Seen as a leader of the Apostles
- Denied Jesus 3 times
- Became Bishop of Rome
 - AKA “The Pope”
- Crucified by Nero in 64 CE (approximately)

Growth of the Church

- Continued to grow in the centuries after
- Persecution by the Roman Empire continued (on and off)
 - Appeal: All are equal in the sight of God**
- West – Rome
 - Spoke Latin
- East – Antioch and Alexandria
 - Spoke Greek
- Greek was widely used in Churches because it was the common language

The Edict of Milan – 313 CE

Constantine the Great

- Became Emperor of the Western Roman Empire in 306 CE
- Had a vision, God helped him win the throne in the civil wars
- Converted to Catholicism
- Issued the **Edict of Milan** in 313 CE which ends the persecution of Catholics in the Empire
- Became first Catholic Emperor

The Council of Nicea – 325 CE

- Constantine brought together the East and West Roman Empire in 324
- Founds Constantinople and makes it the center of the Church
- Brings together important people of the Church in Nicea (Turkey)
- Establish Nicene Creed
- **Creed:** statement of beliefs

Lesson 4 – The Division of the Church

The Medieval Church

410 CE - The Sacking of Rome

- Rome was successfully attacked by a Germanic tribe
- This signaled the collapse of the Western Roman Empire

Western Church

- Leader: Pope
- In: Rome
- Language: Latin
- 800 CE - Further spread of the Western Church under Charlemagne throughout Europe

Eastern Church

- Leader: Patriarch

- In: Constantinople
- Languages: Greek and Russian
- 600 – 800 CE - Rise of Islam weakened the Eastern Church

The Great Schism – 1054 CE

Tensions between East and West:

1. “The Holy Spirit proceeds from the father AND THE SON” (line called the Filioque)
2. Use of religious imagery, the Eastern church saw it as pagan idol worship
3. Pope proclaimed he had supreme power. Patriarch not impressed.

The pope and the patriarch excommunicated each other in 1054 CE

The Eastern Orthodox Church

- Practiced in much of Eastern Europe today
- Lead by Ecumenical Patriarch from Istanbul
- **Divine Liturgy** – long service, ornate clothing and scents

The Roman Catholic Church

1095 – 1291 CE – The Crusades

- Pope Urban II
- Reclaim the Holy Land from the Muslims
- Reclaim Constantinople
- Eventually, the conquests stopped. Europe and the Roman Catholic Church came out stronger

The Protestant Reformation

The Renaissance (1300-1600)

- Rise of the Secular World View
- Value of **humans** over God
- Church controlled much wealth and property
- Printing press

Martin Luther

- German Monk
- Focus on “Inner Faith”
- 1517 - Luther posted his Ninety-Five Theses on a church door

Some Major Reforms:

- Bible is the sole authority (not the bishops or pope)
- Importance of conscience in matters of faith
- Married clergy
- View on **indulgences**
- Mass in the language of the people (Translated bible into German)

Martin Luther Established the Lutheran Church

Lesson 5 – Creating the Modern Church

1545-1563 - The Council of Trent

- Response to the Protestant Reformation
- Called the “Catholic Reformation”
- Overseen by Popes Paul III, Julius III and Pius IV

Outcomes:

1. Tradition as important as scripture
 2. Identified 7 Catholic Sacraments
 3. Celibacy of priests
 4. 3 Destinations of souls of the dead
- And many more... reaffirmed Catholic Faith in a troubling time

1869-1870 First Vatican Council

- Pope Pius IX

Outcomes:

- **Papal Infallibility:** Declared the Pope’s teachings and morals are protected from error by God
- Rarely invoked
- Rome had lost its political power already

1962-1965 – Second Vatican Council

- Popes John XXIII, Paul VI
- Revitalized the Church for a changing world

Outcomes:

1. No more Latin in Churches (for the most part)
2. Priest was turned around
3. Eucharist as bread *or* wine

And many, many more...