The History of the Church 1 – The Early Church: Main Themes

- Authority: Church & State
- Discerning the Faith
- Evangelism
The Roman Empire in 30 AD
Europe in 500AD
Timeline

- c 30 - 34 AD Christ’s death & Resurrection
- 34 AD Stephen – first martyr
- 45 - 67 AD St Paul’s missionary journeys
- 67 AD St Peter & St Paul’s martyrdom
- 70 AD Destruction of Jerusalem
- 303 AD Persecution by Diocletian
- 312 AD Battle of Milvian Bridge
- 380 AD Christianity official religion
- 404 AD St Jerome’s Vulgate Bible
- 410 AD Rome sacked by Goths
- 476 AD Emperor Romulus Augustus deposed in Rome, marked by many as the fall of the Western Roman Empire.
1. Authority

- Christ handing the Keys to St Peter by Il Perugino, Sistine Chapel
1. Authority: Jesus the Christ

- Jesus (Jeshua = God saves)
- Christ (Christos = Anointed (Gk). Same as Messiah (Hebrew) = Anointed)
- Threefold Mission:
  - To redeem & save humanity
  - To show God’s love for humanity
  - To reveal God as Trinity united in Divine Love
1. Authority: Jesus the Christ

- Birth: 6-4 BC
- Ministry (1-3 years) starts: 27-29 AD
- Death, Resurrection & Ascension: 30-34 AD
- Newton: Crucifixion – Friday 23rd April 34 AD
- Sources: Gospels, Josephus, Tacitus

*Orthodox Icon: Life of Jesus*
1. Authority:

Jesus & The Church

1. “You are Peter (Rock) and on this rock I will build My Church & the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. And I will give you the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.” (Mat 16:18)

2. “Whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven” (Mat 16:19)

3. “Receive the Holy Spirit. Whose sins you forgive, they are forgiven. Whose sins you retain, they are retained.” (John 20:23)

4. “Do this (Eucharist) in memory of me” (Luke 22:19)

5. “Make disciples of all nations” (Mat 28:19)

6. “Go into the whole world and proclaim the Gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15)
1. Authority:

St Peter as Leader

- Peter leads in:
  - Selecting Matthias as new Apostle (Acts 1.15-26)
  - Preaching at Pentecost (Acts 2.14)
  - First post-Pentecost miracle
  - Removing Kosher dietary laws (Acts 10.9-16)
  - Baptising first gentiles
  - Mission to Jews outside Palestine
  - Paul stays with him 15 days in Jerusalem (Gal 1:18)
1. Authority: Pentecost

- “When the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place.
- And suddenly there came a sound from Heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.
- And there appeared unto them cloven tongues like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.
- And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and began to speak with other languages, as the Spirit gave them utterance."
- Over 3000 were baptised that day.

Acts 2:1-31
1. Authority: Roman State & Religion

- Roman religion & politics were inseparable
- Emperors treated like gods
- Christians refused to take part in state religion
- 1000 years of success & prosperity (attributed to their pagan gods) at risk?
1. Authority: State Persecution

1. Nero / Domitian / Trajan (AD 64 to AD 117): For any disaster, blame the Christians

2. Marcus Aurelius to Commodus (AD 161 – AD 192): “Don’t ask, don’t tell”

3. Septimus Severus to Diocletian (AD 193 – AD 305): the most violent: Rid the world of this cancer.

4. Martyrs & Apostates
1. Authority: Rome

- Jerusalem first Christian centre
  then Christianity spread to
  Antioch, Ephesus, Corinth &
  Thessalonica.

- But Rome predominated as:
  - Peter’s role (Rock & Keys)
  - Martyrdom of Sts Peter & Paul
    there
  - Power vacuum in West: no rivals
  - Christian expansion westwards
  - Rome seen as the Court of Appeal
1. Authority : The Papacy

- **St Linus (67-76)**

- **Anacletus (76-88)**

- **Clement I (88-97)**

- St Peter called himself “fellow Elder” not Bishop or Pope

- St Irenaeus (190 AD) lists Bishops of Rome: Peter / Linus / Anacletus / Clement / Evaristus…

- Eusebius (300) refers to Linus being appointed Bishop of Rome

- Callistus I (217-222) first to use title “Pontifex Maximus”
1. Authority: Constantine

- Declared Emperor in 306
- 312 Battle of Milvian Bridge where he defeated Maxentius after seeing the Chi Ro in a vision
- 313 Edict of Milan: Christians freedom of worship
- Returned estates to Church
- Called the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD to unite the Church
2. Discerning the Faith
2. Discerning the Faith: The Gospels

- **Matthew (Apostle):** prob 50 – 70s; Jewish audience; Jesus fulfills prophecies
- **Mark (with St Peter):** first Gospel, prob 50s-60s; Roman audience; Action
- **Luke (with St Paul):** prob 60s-80s; Gentile audience; Holy Spirit, prayer & poor; wrote Acts
- **John (Apostle):** prob 70s – 90s; Word Incarnate
2. Discerning the Faith: The Bible

- Oral tradition predominated into 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD
- 4\textsuperscript{th} century synods (especially Synods of Hippo in 393 & Carthage in 397) agreed the list of Old & New Testament Books to be included
- The Council of Trent (1545-63) confirmed this list for the Catholic Church: 46 OT & 27 NT Books
- Protestant churches accepted 39 OT ( & Apocrypha) & 27 NT Books
2. Discerning the Faith: "Other Gospels"

1. “Q” – sayings of Jesus
2. Third Letter to Corinthians
3. Lost Epistle to Corinthians
4. The Didache or “The Lord’s Teaching of the Apostles”
5. Gospel of Thomas (1945)
6. 1 Clement (c95 AD)
7. Shepherd of Hermas
8. Infancy Gospel of James
9. Epistle of Barnabas (70-130 AD)
10. Apocalypse of Peter
2. Discerning the Faith: Early Heresies

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Heresy</th>
<th>Who / When</th>
<th>Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Docetism</td>
<td>1st century</td>
<td>Christ was really pure spirit &amp; so His body &amp; crucifixion were an illusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Montanism</td>
<td>2nd century</td>
<td>No redemption if you fall from grace. So avoid sin!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gnosticism</td>
<td>2nd century</td>
<td>Spiritual = Good. Material = Bad. So God did not create the world but a lesser god, Demiurge. Christ just appeared to be human.</td>
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## 2. Discerning the Faith: Early Heresies

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<tr>
<td>Arianism</td>
<td>3rd century</td>
<td>God the Father created the Son who is not co-equal. So they’re similar (homoiousion) not the same (homoousion)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nestorianism</td>
<td>4th century</td>
<td>Christ had 2 loosely united natures (divine &amp; human) in one being.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monophysitism</td>
<td>5th century</td>
<td>Christ’s divinity dominates His humanity</td>
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2. Discerning the Faith: Christ’s Nature

- 4 Church Councils discerned the Faith:
  - **Nicaea (325)**: Same divine nature of Father & Son (homoousios); Nicene Creed
  - **Constantinople (381)**: added: Holy Spirit “qui simul adoratur” to Creed
  - **Ephesus (431)**: unity of Divine & human in Christ; Mary, Mother of God (“theotokos”)
  - **Chalcedon (451)**: 2 distinct, full & true natures in one Person in Christ; Incarnation & the Trinity
2. Discerning the Faith: Nicene Creed

- I believe in one God, the Father Almighty
- maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible & invisible.
- I believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
- the only begotten Son of God,
- born of the Father before all ages.
- God from God, Light from Light,
- true God from true God,
- begotten, not made,
- Consubstantial with the Father.
- Through Him all things were made.
- For us men and for our salvation,
- He came down from heaven and, by the Holy Spirit, was incarnate of the Virgin Mary and became man.
2. Discerning the Faith: Nicene Creed

- For our sake He was crucified under Pontius Pilate,
- He suffered death and was buried,
- And rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures.
- He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
- He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
- and His kingdom will have no end.
- I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified,
- who has spoken through the Prophets.
- I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
- I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins
- And I look to the resurrection of the dead,
- and the life of the world to come. Amen.
2. Discerning the Faith: The Church Fathers

**Origen (185-254)**: First systematic account of Christian Faith. God’s qualities: power, wisdom, justice & goodness

**St Athanasius (296-373)**: “A principal instrument after the Apostles by which the sacred truths of Christianity have been conveyed to the world.” (Newman)

**St Ambrose (340 – 397)**
Elected Bishop of Milan: “Ubi Petrus ibi Ecclesia”

**St Jerome (340 – 420)**
Translated the Bible into Vulgate Latin from Old Latin, Aramaic, Hebrew & Greek (382-405)
2. Discerning the Faith:
St Augustine (354 – 430)

- Mother: St Monica
- “Lord make me chaste – but not yet!”
- Bishop of Hippo (Tunisia) for 34 years
- Held public debates with heretics & wrote at least 113 books
- Developed theology of the Fall, Atonement for sin, Grace, Free Will & Predestination (personal view)
- Compared the Trinity to 3 aspects of human mind: memory, understanding & will
2. Discerning the Faith:
St Augustine – Key Teachings

- One Catholic Church as spiritual City of God: visible & invisible (past & present)
- Original Sin: Pride & disobedience inherited by all
- Unity of body & soul ("your body is your wife") but the Fall introduces combat between them
- The Real Presence in the Eucharist
- Pacifism but duty to resist evil
2. Discerning the Faith: Sunday Worship

- “And on the day named after the sun, there is a meeting in the same place of all those who live in the towns or the country.
- The records of the Apostles & writings of the Prophets are read publicly… The president admonishes & exhorts to the imitation of these beautiful examples.
- Then we pray together. Bread is brought along with wine & water.
- Then takes place the distribution & sharing of these eucharistic foods. And they are brought to the absent by the deacons.” (Justin Martyr c 150 AD)
2. Discerning the Faith: The Priesthood

- Jesus Christ is the “great High Priest of the New Covenant” & priests participate in His Priesthood
- Origins in 12 Apostles who selected successors as Bishops (Overseers) supported by Presbyters (priests) & Deacons (servants)
- Priests presided at the Eucharist, heard confessions & were counsellors
- By 251 AD Rome had 46 Elders, 7 Deacons, 7 Sub-deacons, 42 Acolytes, 52 “lesser clerics” & 1500 widows to support. 50,000 followers in all.
2. Discerning the Faith: Celibacy

- Council of Elvira (305) called for celibate priesthood; 2nd Lateran Council (1139) made it a requirement
- “We absolutely forbid priests, deacons, and sub-deacons to associate with concubines and women” (1st Lateran Council 1123)
- Eastern Rite Catholic priests could be married but not marry once ordained
3. Evangelism

- “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of time.” (Matthew 28:18–20).
3. Evangelism: Jews & Gentiles

- Early Christians: mostly Jews
- Council of Jerusalem (AD 50): circumcision not required
- AD 70 destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem
- 100 AD: most converts were Gentiles
3. Evangelism:
Early Martyrs

- “The blood of martyrs became the seed of Christians” (Tertullian)
- “Martyr” is Greek for “witness”
- All the apostles (except St John) were martyred. He was exiled to Patmos where he wrote the Book of Revelation & died c AD 100.
- St Stephen stoned to death in 34 AD
- James the Great beheaded in 44 AD.
- Philip the Apostle crucified in 54 AD.
- Matthew the Evangelist killed with a halberd in 60 AD.
3. Evangelism:

Early Martyrs

- Saint Andrew (St. Peter's brother) crucified (late 1st century).
- Saint Peter, crucified upside-down in 67 AD
- Apostle Paul, beheaded in Rome in 67 AD.
- Saint Mark dragged through the streets of Alexandria then beheaded in 68 AD
- Thomas the Apostle killed by a spear in Mylapore, Madras, India in AD 72
- Others were burned, poisoned, stoned, crushed, speared, whipped, drowned & crucified.
3. Evangelism:

St Paul

- Road to Damascus
- Apostle to the Gentiles (Peter to Jews)
- Proclaimed that Jesus’ life, death & resurrection fulfilled Jewish law & Prophets, made sense of the world & offered peace & reconciliation with God for the whole human race.
- 13 epistles traditionally attributed to Paul but probably dictated just 7: Romans, 1st Corinthians, 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, Philippians, 1st Thessalonians and Philemon
3. Evangelism: St Paul’s Journeys
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- 1st Journey: 45-7: (Barnabas & Mark): Seleucia, Cyprus, Iconium, Antioch (Syria)
- 2nd Journey: 51-3: (Silas & Timothy): Syria, Cilicia, Galatia, Samothracia & Neapolis
- 3rd Journey: 54-8: (Timothy & Erastus): Galatia, Ephesus (3 years), Macedonia, Miletus, Jerusalem
- Imprisonment in Judaea: 58-60
- To Rome (prisoner): 60-61: via Melita, Sicily, S Italy
- Imprisonment in Rome: 61-3
- Final Journeys: 63-7: Possibly Colosse, Spain, Corinth, Crete, Macedonia
3. Evangelism:
St Paul as Evangelist - Corinth

1. Asks questions: why were we created? The meaning of life? Is there a God/?Who was Jesus?
2. Acknowledges audience’s traditions & cultures
3. Clearly & boldly states the Gospel message: God, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, the sacraments, forgiveness for all, reconciliation
3. Evangelism:
Timeline of Christian Missions

- 42 AD: St Mark in Alexandria
- 50 AD: Council of Jerusalem – admission of Gentiles
- 52 AD: St Thomas in Malabar, India
- 66 AD: St Thaddeus in Armenia
- 80 AD: France & Tunisia
- 100 AD: Monaco, Algeria, Sri Lanka & Assyria
- 112 AD: Bithynia (Turkey)
- 150 AD: Portugal & Morocco
- 167 AD: Pope Euterius sends Fuganus & Duvianus to Britain
- 174 AD: Austria
- 196 AD: Persia / Iran
3. Evangelism: Timeline of Christian Missions

- 200 AD: Switzerland & Belgium
- 241 AD: Iraq
- 250 AD: St Denis in Paris
- 280 AD: N Italy
- 300 AD: est 10% world population is Christian
- 364 AD: Vandals converted
- 380 AD: Emperor Theodosius makes Christianity official state religion
- 397: St Ninian & S Picts
- 400: Yemen
- 425 AD: Afghanistan & Samarkand
- 450 AD: Lichtenstein
- 496 AD: Clovis 1 King of Franks (& 3000 warriors) converted
3. Evangelism: The Spread of Christianity to 600 AD
The Early Church : Quiz

1. Which Gospel quotes : “Thou art Peter…?”
   1. Matthew 16 : 17-19

2. When & where were Saints Peter & Paul martyred?
   2. 67 AD in Rome

   3. 27 (46 OT (Catholic) & 39 (Protestant)

4. Who wrote “The City of God”?
   4. St Augustine of Hippo

5. What % of the world was Christian by 300 AD?
   5. 10%