

Ancient Church History

- The Spread of Christianity (33 – 100 A.D.)
 - After the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ the Christian faith rapidly spread within the Jewish people in and around Jerusalem.
 - The Apostles (and others of the faith) carried the gospel to other peoples including the Gentiles.
 - During this foundational period the Apostles worked to establish the dogma of the Church.
- The Struggle for Survival of the Old Catholic Imperial Church (100 – 313 A.D.)
 - The Church faced opposition from without – persecution by the Roman state.
 - The Church faced opposition from within – heretical factions (Gnostics and others) arose within the Church.
 - In spite of this opposition, the Church grew stronger under persecution and further established its accepted dogma in response to heresy.
- The Supremacy of the Old Catholic Imperial Church (313 – 590 A.D.)
 - The Church initially handled the problems that arose out of its reconciliation with the state under Constantine and its union with the state in the time of Theodosius.
 - Soon, however, the Church was dominated by the state.
 - Roman emperors demanded a unified dogma in order to have a unified state so as to save Greco-Roman culture.
 - What followed was a long period of creedal controversy.
 - Many of the writings of the Church Fathers were a result of these doctrinal disputes.
 - Monasticism arose mostly as a protest against the increasing worldliness of the organized church.
 - During this period the office of bishop grew in strength and the Roman bishop became more powerful.
 - By 590 A.D. the Old Catholic Imperial Church had essentially become the Roman Catholic Church.
- The Establishment of the Roman Catholic Church (590 A.D. –)
 - Under Gregory I the power of the bishop of Rome became supreme, thus establishing the Roman Papacy.
 - The Latin Vulgate was declared to be the official Bible of the Catholic Church (the word catholic had now taken on a new meaning).
 - Over time the rulings of the Pope and those under his leadership took precedence over the writings of Apostles in the Holy Scriptures.