312-590 AD
The Christian Empire

CONSTANTINE
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tr>
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Christianity and Gnosticism

• How did Christians respond to Gnosticism?
  – 1. A list of authoritative writings (a “canon”) for Christians to follow.

• “Canon” was a Greek word that meant “measuring stick.”
Christianity and Gnosticism

• Christians asked three questions about Christian writings that could have been included in the canon:
  – 1 Is the book connected to an apostle?
  – 2 Do churches throughout the world use the book?
  – 3 Does the book agree with what we already know about God?
Christianity and Gnosticism

• How did Christians respond to Gnosticism?
  – 1. A list of authoritative writings (a “canon”) for Christians to follow.
  – 2. The Rule of Faith
  – 3. More powerful overseers
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AD 312-590 Christian Roman Empire

- Council of Nicea
- Sack of Rome
- Council of Chalcedon
- Leo
- Benedict
- 300
- Constantine’s Conversion
- Theodosius
- 400
- Augustine
- 500
- Fall of Rome
- 600
- Gregory the Great
Persecutions

- When Diocletian became emperor in AD 284, Christians experienced severe empire-wide persecution.

  St. Nicholas of Myra—better known as “Santa Claus”—was imprisoned during Diocletian’s reign.
Persecutions

• On his deathbed, Emperor Galerius legalized Christianity, as long as ...

“... they don’t disturb the public order. May they ask their deity for our well-being and for that of the state.”
After the death of Galerius, Constantine and Maxentius fought for control of the Roman Empire.

In AD 312, Maxentius retreated to Rome as Constantine approached with his army.
Constantine experienced a vision of a cross and saw the words, “In this sign, conquer.”

Before the battle, he placed a cross on his standard and ordered his soldiers to chalk the chiron on their shields.
Constantine

• One year after the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Constantine issued the **Edict of Milan**, legalizing Christianity throughout the Roman Empire.
THE EDICT OF MILAN

“Our purpose is to allow Christians and all others to worship as they desire, so that whatever Divinity lives in the heavens will be kind to us.”
Arius

- **Arius** was an elder in a church in Alexandria, Egypt.
- Around AD 320, Arius began to teach that Jesus was a created being, not fully divine.
Arius

• The followers of Arius sang, “There was a time when the Son did not exist!”
• Those who disagreed with Arius expressed their beliefs in a song that Christians still sing—*Gloria Patri*. 
GLORIA PATRI

“Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost!
“As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.
“Amen, amen.”
Council of Nicea

• To end the strife in the churches, Emperor Constantine convened a church-wide council.

• Constantine invited every overseer in the known world to gather in Nicea, a village in Asia Minor.
Council of Nicea

• On July 4, 325, three hundred overseers and 2,000 elders and deacons met Emperor Constantine in Nicea.

• In less than three centuries, the church moved from a persecuted minority to the favored religion of the Roman Empire.
Council of Nicea

• Most overseers at the Council of Nicea recognized that Arius’s teachings were false.

• To clarify the church’s beliefs about God, the Council of Nicea formulated the Creed of Nicea.
THE CREED OF NICEA

“We believe in one God, the Father, almighty creator of all things, visible and invisible.”
“We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, God’s Son, begotten from the Father, uniquely begotten from the Father’s essence—God from God, Light from Light, very God from very God, begotten not created, of one essence with the Father.”
“Through him, all things were made in heaven and earth. For us and for our salvation, he came down and was made flesh, and, being human, he died and rose again on the third day. He ascended into heaven and is coming to judge the living and the dead.”
“We believe in the Holy Spirit.”

“The universal apostolic church condemns all who say, ‘There was a time when the Son did not exist.’”

“Amen.”
Council of Nicea

- After the Council of Nicea, the emperor exiled Arius and two overseers who refused to sign the Creed of Nicea.
- For the first time, the power of the Empire was used to enforce the church’s beliefs.
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<tr>
<td>Christ is fully divine</td>
<td>Nicea 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ is fully human</td>
<td>Constantinople 381</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ is a unified person</td>
<td>Ephesus 431</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christ is a human and a divine in one person</td>
<td>Chalcedon 451</td>
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Monks

• As Christianity became more popular, many Christians who wanted deeper relationships with God formed isolated communities in the deserts.

• These Christians—who typically vowed to remain celibate for life—became known as “monks” and “nuns” (from the Latin word for “alone”).
Jerome starts translating the Scriptures into Latin in AD 410 and finishes 25 years later. This translation, called the Latin Vulgate, remains the basic Bible for many centuries.
this map was scanned from

*The Apostolic Fathers*

J.B. Lightfoot and J.R. Harmer, revised by Michael W. Holmes

Recommended Resources

- Christian History Made Easy
  - Key events and people every Christian should know
  - From the time of Jesus to today
  - How the Bible came to us
  - Time lines, worksheets, websites
  - Phonics, maps, and illustrations
  - 13 Lessons with Leader’s Guide
  - For churches, schools, small groups, homeschoolers & individuals

by Dr. Timothy Paul Jones
Foreword by Don K. MacDonald
and Mark Shell, Managing Editor, Christianity Today

Here you have a beautifully simple, beginner-friendly telling of Christian history, a precious heritage.

—J.I. Packer