

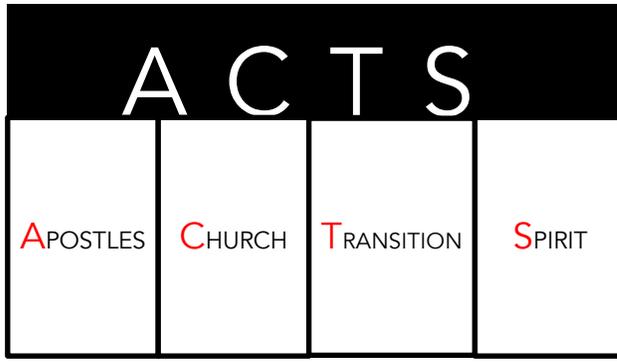
## Church History

Lesson 2: The Spread & Survival of Christianity (Part 1)  
 "The Apostles & The Apostolic Fathers 33-150AD"

### THE STORY (33-150AD)

#### THE APOSTOLIC AGE (33-100AD)

1. The Death, Burial & Resurrection of Christ (33AD)
2. The Book of Acts (33-63AD)



What Jesus Continued To Do And To Teach,  
 By The Holy Spirit, Through The Apostles,  
 To The Church,  
 In A 30-Year Period Of Transition  
 From The Age Of Law  
 To The Age Of Grace.

#### The Apostles Are Given:

**Proof** of The Resurrection  
 The **Program of God** Concerning The Kingdom  
 The **Promise** of The Holy Spirit  
 The **Plan** For The Church In This Age.

The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach, 2 until the day when He was taken up to heaven, after He had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom He had chosen. 3 To these He also presented Himself alive after His suffering, **by many convincing proofs**, appearing to them over a period of forty days and speaking of **the things concerning the kingdom of God**. 4 Gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to **wait for what the Father had promised**, "Which," He said, "you heard of from Me; 5 for John baptized with water, but you will be **baptized with the Holy Spirit** not many days from now."

6 So when they had come together, they were asking Him, saying, "**Lord, is it at this time You are restoring the kingdom to Israel?**" 7 He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or epochs which the Father has fixed by His own authority; 8 **but you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses** both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."

Purpose	Witness in Jerusalem		Witness In Judea & Samaria		Witness to the Utter Most Parts of the World		
	1:1	8:4	8:5	12:25	13:1	28:31	
Power of the Holy Spirit	Power of the Church	Progress of the Church	Expansion of the Church		Paul's Three Journeys	Paul's Three Trials	
Passages	1:1	2:47 3:1 8:4	8:5	12:25	13:1	21:16 21:17	28:31
People	Jews		Samaritans		Gentiles		
	Peter		Peter & Phillip		Paul		
Place	Jerusalem		Judea & Samaria		Uttermost Parts		
Period of Time	2 Years (A.D. 33-35)		13 Years (A.D. 35-48)		15 Years (A.D. 48-63)		

### 3. The Martyrdoms of Paul & Peter (65-67AD)

#### 2 Timothy 4:6-8

For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. 7 I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; 8 in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.

### 4. The Destruction of Jerusalem (70AD)

#### Luke 19:41-44

41 When He approached Jerusalem, He saw the city and wept over it, 42 saying, "If you had known in this day, even you, the things which make for peace! But now they have been hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you when your enemies will throw up a barricade against you, and surround you and hem you in on every side, 44 and they will level you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave in you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

### 5. The Close of the Canon (95AD)

#### Revelation 22:18-21

18 I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book.

20 He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming quickly." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.

21 The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

## 6. The Death of John: The Last Apostle (95-100AD)

- Paul was imprisoned under Nero, then beheaded in Rome
- James the brother of John was beheaded by Herod (Acts 12:2)
- Thomas went as far as India where he was "slain with a dart" (arrow?)
- Simon Peter was crucified (according to Jerome) upside down in Rome under Nero
- Simon the Zealot preached throughout Africa, was also crucified
- Mark founded the church in Egypt and was burned alive
- Bartholomew preached in Armenia and "after divers persecutions, he was beaten down with staves, then crucified; and after being excoriated, was beheaded."
- Andrew evangelized in Ethiopia, was crucified
- Matthew preached in Egypt and Ethiopia, until the king had him "run through with a spear"
- Philip ministered in Greece, was "crucified and stoned to death"
- James the brother of Jesus was beaten to death by Pharisees and Sadducees
- John the apostle was exiled on the isle of Patmos, and later died of natural causes

## THE APOSTOLIC FATHERS (100-150)

### 1. Clement of Rome (35-99AD)

Bishop of Rome. He wrote to Corinth to promote unity against schism by obedience to church offices. He mentioned Paul's trip to Spain (5:5-7). The Second Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians illustrates the form and content of second-century preaching.

#### (The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians, Chapter XLVII (Early Church Fathers Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I)

Take up the [epistle of the blessed Apostle Paul](#). What did he write to you at the time when the Gospel first began to be preached? Truly, [under the inspiration of the Spirit](#), he wrote to you concerning himself, and Cephas, and Apollos, because even then parties had been formed among you.

### 2. Papias (60-163AD?)

Bishop of Hierapolis. Collected the sayings of eyewitnesses of Christ and the Apostles.

#### "The Exposition Of The Oracles Of The Lord."

If, then, any one who had attended on the elders came, I asked minutely after their sayings,—what Andrew or Peter said, or what was said by Philip, or by Thomas, or by James, or by John, or by Matthew, or by any other of the Lord's disciples: which things Aristion and the presbyter John, the disciples of the Lord, say.

The Elder also said this, "Mark, being the interpreter of Peter, whatsoever he remembered he wrote accurately, but not however in the order that these things were spoken or done by our Lord. For he neither heard the Lord, nor followed him, but afterwards, as I said, he was with Peter, who did not make a complete [or ordered] account of the Lord's logia, but constructed his teachings according to chreiai [concise self-contained teachings]. So Mark did nothing wrong in writing down single matters as he remembered them, for he gave special attention to one thing, of not passing by anything he heard, and not falsifying anything in these matters."

### 3. Ignatius (35-117)

Bishop of Antioch. He wrote 7 letters to the churches of Asia opposing docetism, which denied Christ's real humanity, and urging obedience to the ruling bishops, the elders, and the deacons (first mention of a threefold order).

#### The Epistle of Ignatius to the Trallians; Chap IX.—Reference to the History of Christ

Stop your ears, therefore, when any one speaks to you at variance with (18) Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who was descended from David, and was also of Mary; who **was truly born**, and did eat and drink. He was truly persecuted under Pontius Pilate; **He was truly crucified, and [truly] died, in the sight of beings in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. He was also truly raised from the dead.** His Father quickening Him, even as after the same manner His Father will so raise up us who believe in Him by Christ Jesus, apart from whom we do not possess the true life.

### 4. Polycarp (69-155)

Bishop of Smyrna. A Disciple of John. He wrote to the Philippians and after his death a letter describing his brave acceptance of martyrdom was sent to the churches.

#### (The Apostolic Fathers, the Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, Chapter III (Early Church Fathers Ante-Nicene Fathers, Volume I)

These things, brethren, I write to you concerning righteousness, not because I take anything upon myself, but because ye have invited me to do so. **For neither I, nor any other such one, can come up to the wisdom of the blessed and glorified Paul.** He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive.

**And when absent from you, he wrote you a letter, which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you, and which, being followed by hope, and preceded by love towards God, and Christ, and our neighbour, "is the mother of us all."** For if any one be inwardly possessed of these graces, he hath fulfilled the command of righteousness, since he that hath love is far from all sin.

"Eighty and six years have I served him, and he hath done me no wrong, how then can I blaspheme my king who saved me?"

2 Timothy 2:2 — Passing on the Tradition				
"The things which you have heard from me . . ."		". . . entrust these to faithful men . . ."		". . . who will be able to teach others also."
FIRST GENERATION		SECOND GENERATION		THIRD GENERATION
Peter	→	Clement	→	Justin
John		Ignatius		Melito
Paul		Aristides		Athenagoras
Luke		Polycarp		Theophilus
Timothy		Papias		Irenaeus

**1. The Religious Climate in the Empire**

- A. Loss of Hope
- B. Syncretistic
- C. Emperor Worship
  - “equally true by people, equally useful by magistrates, philosophers as equally false”

**2. Christianity & Judaism**

- A. Justin Martyr: Dialogue with Trypho (Hellenistic Jew)
- B. Babylonian Talmud-Anathema against Christians
- C. Early Church Fathers drew clear line between Christianity and Judaism, some became more antagonistic.

If any one celebrates the passover along with the Jews, or receives the emblems of their feast, he is a partaker with those that killed the Lord and His apostles. - Phil. 14.1

Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. - Mag. 8.1--Ignatius

The Epistle to Diognetus

...the Christians...disregard the world and despise death, and take no account of those who are regarded as gods by the Greeks, neither observe the superstition of the Jews... - 1:1

But again their scruples concerning meats, and their superstition relating to the sabbath and the vanity of their circumcision and the dissimulation of their fasting and new moons, I do [not] suppose you need to learn from me, are ridiculous and unworthy of any consideration. - 4:1

**3. Christianity & Roman Culture**

- A. Clement of Alexandria
  - Hellenistic: Philo Jewish Philosopher/Later Neo-Platonism
  - Hermeneutics: Allegory
  - Adopts OT/Greek Philosophy...Law & Philosophy useable
- B. Tertullian
  - “What has the Academy to do with the Church...Athens to do with Jerusalem” “The first thing we believe is that there is nothing else we ought to believe”
  - The philosophers stole any truth they have from the Bible
  - “I believe because it is absurd”
- C. Christ & Culture, Christ of Culture, Christ Against Culture

#### 4. Persecution "The blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church"--Tertullian

- A. Earliest Persecution was by the Jews
- B. 10 Waves of Roman Persecution (from protector to persecutor)
  - Nero (64 A.D.)

"Accordingly, an arrest was first made of all who pleaded guilty; then, upon their information, an immense multitude was convicted, not so much of the crime of firing the city, as of hatred against mankind. Mockery of every sort was added to their deaths. Covered with the skins of beasts, they were torn by dogs and perished, or were nailed to crosses, or were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired..." - Annals XV.44 Tacitus

#### **Facing Persecution: Lessons From The Early Church**

The Early Church (100--313 AD) faced persecution on three major fronts, the Roman Empire, Pagan Intellectuals, Jews & Heretics. Each front presented a specific challenge as well as a special circumstance for the growth of the Gospel.

*Legal and Physical* persecution came from **Rome**, *Philosophical, Historical and Ethical* persecution came from **Pagan Intellectuals** and *Religious and Theological* persecution arose from the **Jews & Heretics**.

The basic political cause of persecution was the Roman fear of exclusive Christianity threatening the religiously syncretistic state. Some of the false charges leveled against Christians:

**Cannibalism:** The communion elements as the body and blood of Christ

**Disruption Of Business:** The idol industry took a hit and Sunday services.

**Gross Immorality-Incest:** Christians called each other brother and sister.

**Anti-Family:** Christians followed Christ and loved Him above family ties.

**Atheism:** Christians did not worship the pagan gods so they were considered atheists.

**Not Patriotic:** Refusing to Worship the Emperor. Unwilling to sacrifice to the gods.

**Novelty:** Christianity was at first protected as a sect of Judaism but soon was attacked as a new religion.

**Anti-Intellectual:** Christians appealed to the final authority of Scripture over against the philosophers or liberal elite.

**Enemies of Moses:** Jews claimed that Christians were against the Old Testament instead of fulfilling it.

#### **How the Early Church Responded to Persecution**

1. Christians **died** for their faith. (Martyrs)
2. Christians **defended** their rights as Roman Citizens by written appeals to government. (The Apologists)
3. Christians **denounced** false doctrine by writing against the Jewish Legalists and Gentile Heretics. (The Polemicists)
4. Christians **demonstrated** their innocence by living morally pure lives. (The Christian Life)
5. Christians **declared** the true Scriptures against the false writings of the Gnostics. (The Canon)
6. Christians **defined** the fundamentals of Biblical Doctrine to combat the re-defining of the Heretics. (The Creeds)
7. Christians **disciplined** those who recanted their faith under persecution. (The Purity of the Church)
8. Christians **developed** a curriculum to train new converts and protect Christians against intellectual attacks. (The Catechism)
9. Christians **devoted** themselves to working their jobs unto the Lord and honoring the King. (The Christian Citizen)
10. Christians **directed** their allegiance to Christ as Lord of all of life, not simply their "religious life". (The Christian Worldview)

## 5. Spread of Christianity Geographically

### A. Major Cities

- Antioch
- Jerusalem
- Rome
- Alexandria
- Ephesus

### B. Pauline Church Plants

### C. 7 Churches of Revelation

#### I. West

1. ACTS to Asia Minor to Greece to Italy perhaps Spain
2. "Bible Belt" in Asia Minor
3. By 185: Lyon bishop put to death, Spain, Gaul, North Africa
4. Tradition: Mark established Alexandrian church...

#### II. East

1. 1<sup>st</sup> NT translation-Syriac
2. 1<sup>st</sup> Christian hymn book in Syria "Odes of Solomon"
3. 1<sup>st</sup> church building Edessa
4. 1<sup>st</sup> Christian king or state in Armenia 100 years before Constantine
5. India- Apostle Thomas...probably historically accurate
6. From Syria to Edessa To Armenia to Arbela across Tigris near ancient Nineveh to Persia to Afghanistan by end of 2<sup>nd</sup> century

## 6. Church Worship

### A. Met on Sunday

### B. Elders & Deacons, Bishops

### C. The Word, Prayer, Lord's Supper for Baptized members only

### D. Justin Martyr's Description of a Church Service (2<sup>nd</sup> Century)

And we afterwards continually remind each other of these things. And the wealthy among us help the needy; and we always keep together; and for all things wherewith we are supplied, we bless the Maker of all through His Son Jesus Christ, and through the Holy Ghost. And on the day called Sunday, all who live in cities or in the country gather together to one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read, as long as time permits; then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs, and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray, and, as we before said, when our prayer is ended, bread and wine and water are brought, and the president in like manner offers prayers and thanksgivings, according to his ability, and the people assent, saying Amen; and there is a distribution to each, and a participation of that over which thanks have been given, and to those who are absent a portion is sent by the deacons. And they who are well to do, and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows and those who, through sickness or any other cause, are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly, because it is the first day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Saviour on the same day rose from the dead. For He was crucified on the day before that of Saturn (Saturday); and on the day after that of Saturn, which is the day of the Sun, having appeared to His apostles and disciples, He taught them these things, which we have submitted to you also for your consideration.

## 7. Who Were the Christians

- A. Gentile & Jews...mostly Gentile
- B. Common People- 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians not many noble not many wise
- C. Women accepted as full members of the church
- D. Slaves
- E. Some from upper class
- F. Philippians- Caesars household

