

1. EARLY CHURCH HISTORY – PART I

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES: There are many references on this topic. Some well known references include

- i) 2000 Years of Coptic Christianity by Otto Meinardus
- ii) The Apostolic Fathers, Edited by Jack Sparks.
- iii) The Early Church, by Henry Chadwick
- iv) Writings of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and post-Nicene Fathers.

VERSE: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the traditions which you were taught, whether by word or our epistle” (2 Thessalonians 2:15).

LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The primary objective of this unit is to study early church history and in particular, study the era of the apostolic fathers. The church started on the day of Pentecost in 33 AD and it was led by the 12 disciples of Christ. The 12 disciples of Christ lived in the era of 33 AD – 100 AD. The **Apostolic Fathers** is a term used to describe a group of early Christian writings produced in the late 1st century and the first half of the 2nd century, that is the period from 100 AD – 180 AD approximately. Several of the apostolic fathers were actually direct disciples of the disciples of Christ. The main aim of this unit will be to examine the writings of these fathers, their place in church history, their theological contributions, and their martyrdom.

Before going deeply into the lives of the apostolic fathers, it is important to study basic facts in early church history. First, the calendar that we use today is based on how many years after the birth of Christ. Anno Domini is a Latin phrase which means the year of the Lord. Thus, 0 AD marks the birth of Christ and 33 AD marks the resurrection of Christ. The church started on the day of Pentecost, which is 33 AD. Thus, the disciples of Christ started their missionary work from this date. Pentecost is known as the birth day of the church. The church thus started approximately 2000 years ago. We first study the missionary work of the 12 disciples of Christ in establishing the early church.

Lesson Body:

The Disciples of Christ and the Early Church:

1. St. Peter

He is Simon the son of Jonah from Bethsaida on the Lake of Galilee. He and his brother St. Andrew might have been former disciples of St. John the Baptist. They were fishermen. His first meeting with the Lord happened when St. Andrew informed him, upon advice of St. John the Baptist, we found the Messiah and they took him to the Lord Jesus Christ where the Lord told him (You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas which is translated "a rock." (John 1:42). However, St. Peter followed the Lord Jesus Christ as a disciple after the miracle of catching an over-abundance of fish (Luke 5:1-11) and the Lord called him Peter as a symbol of his apostleship. St. Peter was one of the two disciples who went to prepare the last Passover on Holy Thursday and one of the three disciples who were witnesses to the miracle of raising the daughter of Jairus, Transfiguration of the Lord Jesus Christ, The Lord Jesus Christ's Prayer in Gethsemane and was one of the four disciples which heard the Lord Jesus Christ's prophecy about destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. St. Peter was the first one who confessed the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the first one who preached with the Lord Jesus Christ on Pentecost and cut the ear of the servant of the high priest however, he denied the Lord Jesus Christ three times before servants and slaves. St. Peter repented and the Lord Jesus Christ returned him once again to his apostleship and said to him feed My sheep. (John 21:15-17). After the day of Pentecost, he preached among the Jews in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria. The Lord did many miracles through him such as healing of a lame man (Acts 3), healing of Aeneas, and raising of Tabitha from death (Acts 9). He began preaching to the Gentiles starting with Cornelius and his house after seeing a vision (Acts 10). He preached in Antioch, Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. He achieved the crown of martyrdom in Rome about 67 AD during Nero's time.

2. St. Andrew

He is St. Peter's brother, and a former disciple of St. John the Baptist. St. John the Baptist led

him to the Lord Jesus Christ and so St. Andrew spent a day with the Lord Christ to see His wonders and teaching and when he became confident that the Lord Jesus Christ was the Messiah, he called his brother St. Peter to meet the Lord Jesus Christ who called them to follow Him. He followed the Lord Jesus Christ as a disciple after the miracle of catching great numbers of fish. The Holy Gospel mentioned St. Andrew in the feeding of the five thousand (John 6:8-9) when Greeks asked him to see the Lord Jesus Christ (John 12:22) and when he asked the Lord about the end of the ages and destruction of Jerusalem and its temple (Mark 13:3). He preached in Asia Minor (Turkey) and states north of the Black Sea, and was martyred on a cross in Petras one of the Greek cities. He is the intercessor of Russian and Greek churches. His relics were transferred from Petras to Constantinople on 357 AD and then to Amalpaie City of Italy in the 11th century and the relics are still present in this cathedral at the present time.

3. St. James the Son of Zebedee

He is John's brother from Bethesda. He is also known as James the Elder. The Lord called him as a disciple with his brother John and so they left their father with the fishermen and followed him (Matthew 4:21-22). He was one of the witnesses of the first miracle of the Lord Jesus Christ in Cana of Galilee (John 2:2). He was one of the witnesses to the rising of daughter of Jairus from death, Transfiguration, and prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ in Gethsemane. The Lord Jesus Christ called him with his brother John the "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17). He preached in Judea and Samaria. He was beheaded by Herod Agrippa and attained the crown of martyrdom in 44 AD (Acts 12:1). While he was on his way to be beheaded, he cured a lame man and so the soldier who led him to his death believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and was martyred at the same time along with him. He remained a virgin all his life. His relics were transferred to Compostella of Spain and have remained there until today.

4. St. John the Beloved

He is St. James' brother, the son of Zebedee. He was the disciple whom the Lord Jesus loved (John 19:26) and he laid on the Lord Jesus Christ's chest at the Last Supper. He is the Apostle who became known for his virginity, simple heart, and great love for the Lord Jesus Christ. He was the only disciple who followed the Lord Jesus Christ to the Holy Cross and so the Lord Jesus bequeathed him St. Mary as a mother and from that time she lived with him (John 19:25-27). Many believe that St. John's family was a well-to-do family and resided in Bethesda. He might have been a former disciple of St. John the Baptist for some time (John 1:35-42). His mother was one of the women who followed the Lord Jesus Christ and served Him (Matthew 27:55, Mark 10:40-41). St. John recorded the Lord Jesus Christ's speech about Holy Communion (John 6), the

only one who mentioned the meeting of the Lord Jesus Christ with the Samaritan woman (John 4), story of the Lord Jesus Christ with the woman which committed adultery (John 8), healing of the man born blind (John 9) and the raising of Lazarus from the dead (John 11), and he is the only one who mentioned the last prayer of the Lord Jesus Christ before Crucifixion (John 17). He was one of the three disciples who were witnesses of the miracle of raising the daughter of Jairus, in the Transfiguration, and in Gethsemane. He went very early with St. Peter to the Lord

Jesus Christ's tomb on the Glorious Resurrection Sunday and even reached the tomb first before St. Peter. He was the only disciple who recognized the Lord Jesus Christ in his apparition on Lake of Galilee after His blessed Glorious Resurrection and said to St Peter "He is The Lord", (John 21:7). He was a leader of the early Church along with St. Peter and St. James, was with St. Peter in performing the miracle of healing of leman of the temple (Acts 3), witness for the Lord Jesus Christ before the Synagogue (Acts 4) and laying their hands on the believers of Samaria to accept the Holy Spirit (Acts 8). He stayed in Jerusalem until St. Mary's departure as he took care of her. He preached in Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria and after her departure he preached in Asia Minor completing the work of St. Paul and St. Apollos and set his center in Ephesus (Acts 18:24-82 & 19:1-12) where he oversaw the churches in Smyrna, Philadelphia, Sardis, Pergamos, and Thyatira which were mentioned in the Holy Book of Revelation. For his zealousness in teaching and preaching, the Emperor Domitian seized him and brought him to Rome where he was thrown into a pot of oil but the Lord saved him and so the emperor exiled him to Patmos around 95 AD where he saw his revelation and wrote his Holy Book. After Domitian's death, he returned to Ephesus to continue his preaching. One of the most common titles for St John is the Beloved and he mentioned this in John 13:23, 19:26, 20:2, 21:7 & 20. He was called the "love" Apostle where his Holy Gospel, his Holy Epistles and sermons were centered upon the Christian love. Also, he defended the Orthodox faith against heretics. He departed in 100 AD.

5. St. James the Just

He is James the son of Alphaeus, one of the twelve disciples. He was one of the 3 pillars of the disciples preaching the word of God to the Jews, as St. Paul mentioned (Galatians 2:7-9). He was known as the Lord's brother as his mother was a sister to St. Mary the Virgin, the wife of Cleopas, which means Alphaeus in Aramaic. He was known also St. James the Young (Mark 15:40), and James the Just for his holiness and as Bishop of Jerusalem. He headed the Council of Jerusalem in 50 AD (Acts 15). He wrote his Holy Epistle where he focused on good deeds as necessary along with the faith. He had a Liturgy in the Syrian Church. He was ascetic and used to kneel during prayer until his knees became like those of a camel. For his preaching, Jews threw him down the mountain of the temple, and then stoned him, and then someone hit him on his head putting an end to his holy life and so had the crown of martyrdom about 62 AD. Josephus mentioned that destruction of Jerusalem and its temple was God's punishment for the Jews because they killed St. James.

6. St. Philip

He was born in Bethesda (John 1:44). He studied the law and prophecies and so he said to Nathaniel *"We found the Messiah about him Moses wrote in the Law and the prophets, Jesus"* (John 1:45). He was mentioned in the miracle of feeding the five thousand when the Lord asked from where we can buy food for those to eat and St. Philip answered food with 200 coins is not enough for them (John 6:5-7). Also, so the Greek visitors asked him to see the Lord Jesus Christ on the Monday following Palm Sunday (John 12:20-22). He is also mentioned in the Last Supper when he said to the Lord *"Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us"* and so the Lord

answered him saying *“Have I been with you so long and yet you have not known me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, show us the Father”* (John 14: 8-10). He preached in Persia (Iran), Asia Minor (Turkey), and Hierapolis which was close to Colosse in Asia Minor, where he was martyred upon a cross.

7. St. Bartholomew

All scholars agree that Bartholomew is Nathaniel mentioned in John 1:45 where St. Philip brought him to the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw the Lord Jesus Christ on the Lake of Galilee after the Lord’s Glorious Resurrection. He preached in Yemen and Armenia where he was martyred and so the Armenian Church considers him her intercessor.

8. St. Thomas

He is from Galilee and called the Twin (John 11:16 and 21:2). He loved the Lord greatly and so when the Lord intended to go to Bethany, St. Thomas said to the disciples we should go also to die with him (John 11:8-16). In the Last Supper he asked the Lord *“Lord, we don’t know where you are going so how we can know the way”* and so the Lord answered him saying *“I am the way, the truth and the life”* (John 14:1-6). Also, he didn’t believe the Lord’s Glorious Resurrection and appearance to the Apostles in the Upper Room on Glorious Resurrection Sunday when St. Thomas was not present and so the Lord appeared again on the following Sunday and He said to *Thomas “Reach your finger here, and look at My hands, and reach your hand here and put it into my said. Do not be unbelieving, but believing. And Thomas answered and said to Him My Lord and my God. Jesus said to him Thomas because you have seen ME, you have believed, blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed”* (John 21:24-29). He preached in Judea, Iraq, Ethiopia, Arabia, India and China. He is the intercessor of the Indian Church. He attained the crown of martyrdom in Malabar of India by the pagans’ priests.

9. St. Matthew

He was from Galilee and called Levi. He was a tax collector despised by his people. When the Lord called him for discipleship he left everything and followed him (Matthew 9:9-24). He preached in Judea, Ethiopia, and Persia. He wrote his Holy Gospel to the Hebrews (Jews).

10. St. Jude

He is also called Thaddeus, Lebbeus, and James’ brother for differentiation from Judas Iscariot who betrayed the Lord (Matthew 10:3, Mark 3:18, Luke 6:16 and Acts 1:13). He was one of the Lord Jesus Christ’s cousins. He was mentioned only in John 14:22 & 23 *“Judas not Iscariot said to him, Lord how is it that you will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world. Jesus answered and said to him if anyone loves me he will keep my word and my Father will love him and we will come to him and make our home with him”*. He preached in Iraq, Arabia and Persia where he was martyred. He wrote the Holy Epistle that bears his name and in which he warned the believers against the heretics and false teachers and brothers.

11. St Simon, the Canaanite:

He was mentioned as the Canaanite in Matthew 10:4 and Mark 3:18. St. Luke mentioned him as Zealot (Luke 6:15 and Acts 1:13). It is clear both Canaanite and Zealot were used interchangeably. He preached in Syria, Iraq and Persia where he was martyred.

12. St. Matthias

He was one of the seventy apostles and was chosen in the absent place of Judas Iscariot (Acts 1:15-26). He preached in Judea, Samaria and Asia Minor where he was martyred.

Some Well Known Apostles in the Bible who were not Disciples:

1. St. Paul, the Apostle

He was born (5 AD) in Tarsus the capital of state of Cilicia in Asia Minor. His parents were Jews of the Benjamin tribe. He had Roman citizenship as his homeland was a Roman state. He was a disciple for Gamaliel, one of the famous Jewish scholars during his time. He spoke Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic which allowed him to preach worldwide. Also, he worked as a tent-maker. The first mention of St. Paul was in the Holy Book of Acts at the stoning of St. Stephen where he guarded the clothes of those stoning the martyr. After that he carried letters from the chief priests to persecute more Christians in Damascus where the Lord appeared to him (Acts 9). He was baptized by Ananias the Bishop of Damascus and was filled with the Holy Spirit. He spent about three years in Arabia (Galatians 1:17&18) where he devoted himself to praying, fasting and studying of the Old Testament in the light of gifts of the New Testament (Galatians 1:11&12). Three years after his conversion from 40 AD to his martyrdom in 67 AD, he made three missionary trips, in addition to visiting Jerusalem five times and spending about 4 years as a prisoner in Rome. Antioch of Syria was the base for his missionary trips because Church of Antioch was the Church of the Gentiles. From 40 AD to 44 AD he began to preach in Damascus where the Jews convinced the governor to seize him but the believers helped him to flee out of the city (Acts 9:23-25, 2 Corinthians 11: 32-33). Then he went to Jerusalem where he met St. Peter and St. James (Galatians 1:19). In Jerusalem the believers did not believe his conversion but St. Barnabas convinced them and so they glorified the Lord for His miracles (Acts 9:26 &27, Galatians 1:18-24). He had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ in the temple where he ordered him to leave the city as they would not accept his teaching and the Lord then would send him to the Gentiles (Acts 22:17). The Jews tried to kill him but the believers helped him to flee to Caesarea then to Tarsus where he met St. Barnabas and helped him in preaching in Antioch for one year (Acts 11:25-26). But because of famine St. Paul and St. Barnabas went to Jerusalem carrying the gifts of the believers in Antioch to the mother Church in Jerusalem, where at that time St. James the elder was martyred. The first trip of preaching was from 45 AD to 50 AD. He began his trip with St. Barnabas and St. Mark where they sailed from Seleucia of Antioch to Cyprus and Salamis then to Asia Minor but St. Mark left them in Perga of Pamphilia. During this trip Elymas the sorcerer was punished by blindness and the proconsul of Cyprus Sergius Paulus converted to Christianity (Acts 13: 1-12). Also they ministered in Antioch of Pisidia, where the Jews persecuted them. In Lystra the Lord used them to heal a paralyzed man since his birth and

when the people there saw this miracle they thought that St Paul and St. Barnabas were god and tried to worship them and the Apostles prevented them from doing this (14: 8-18), however, the Jews who came from Iconium persuaded the multitudes and so they stoned them and they were dragged out of the city (Acts 14:19). This trip ended by joining the Council of Jerusalem 50 AD. The second trip was from 51 AD to 54 AD where he began his ministry to the Greeks. He was joined by Silas and Timothy. They passed Phrygia and Galatia where the Holy Spirit prevented them to minister in Asia. Then passed to Troas where St. Paul had a vision of a man of Macedonia and pleaded him come over to Macedonia and help us and so St. Paul began his ministry to the Greeks (Acts 16:1-10). In Philippi, Lydia and the Philippian Jailer converted to Christianity (Acts 16:11-34). Then they went to Thessalonica and Berea (Acts 17) where they established the Churches there and were persecuted by the Jews. Then St. Paul and St. Silas went to Athens where he met the Epicurean and Stoic philosophers in Areopagus (Acts 17:16-34) where Dionysius the Areopagite, who became a Bishop of Athens later, and Damaris joined St. Paul and believed (Acts 17:34). Then St. Paul ministered in Corinth and founded the Church there. In spring of 54 AD he returned to Antioch passing through Ephesus, Caesarea, and Jerusalem and wrote 2 Holy Epistles to the Thessalonians. The third trip of ministry was from 54 AD to 58 AD where he ministered in Ephesus and spent 3 years there (Acts 20:31). He visited the Churches of Macedonia and Corinth where he wrote his Holy Epistles to the Galatians, Corinthians, and Romans. In spring of 58 AD he visited Jerusalem for the fifth and last time carrying the gifts of the Greek believers to the poor of Jerusalem. He passed through Philippi, Troas, and Meletus where Jews tried to kill him but the commander Lassies sent him to Felix in Caesarea where he was imprisoned for 2 years (58-60 AD) (Acts 23) after that he was sent to Rome. He spent the winter in Malta and he arrived in Rome in March 61 AD in the 7th year of Nero. He spent 2 years in Rome in a house he rented bound with chains but he had the freedom to minister (Acts 28: 30 &31) where many believed including some in the royal court. He spent his life preaching the Kingdom of God (Acts 28:31). He wrote his Holy Epistles to the Hebrews, Titus, and Timothy. He attained the crown of martyrdom in Rome in 67 AD.

2. St. Barnabas the Apostle

He was a Jew from the tribe of Levi. His family had settled in Cyprus and had relatives in Jerusalem, of them, St. Mark's family and so St. Paul called St. Mark St. Barnabas's nephew "son of his sister" (Colossians 4:10). According to our Church's tradition St. Barnabas was one of the seventy disciples. His name was Joseph and the Apostles called him Barnabas, which is translated Son of Encouragement (Acts 4:36). St. Luke mentioned in the Holy Book of Acts that St. Barnabas sold his properties and brought the money and laid it at the Apostles' feet (Acts 4:36 & 37). Also, he mentioned concerning him *"For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith"* (Acts 11:24). The Apostles sent him to Antioch to minister with the Holy Gospel (Acts 11:22). He ministered in Antioch and brought St. Paul to minister with him for one year (Acts 11:22-26). In that year, they went to Jerusalem carrying the gifts of the believers in Antioch to the poor in Judea and in their return to Antioch they brought St Mark (Acts 12:25). Then, he ministered in Cyprus (Acts 15: 36-40) and joined the Council of Jerusalem. St. Paul appointed to him in his Epistles to the Corinthians and Colossians (1 Corinthians 9:6 and Colossians 4:10). He was martyred in Salamina of Cyprus where Jews seized him, stoned and

burned him about 61 AD but his body did not burn. In the 5th century, God revealed to the Bishop of Cyprus the site of his tomb. There is an epistle in his name which was very popular in the early centuries supported by many scholars and fathers in the church but others denied it.

3. St. Mark the Evangelist and Beholder of God

St Mark authored the Gospel of St Mark and founded the Church of Alexandria and is considered the Coptic Church's first pope. St Mark was born in Pentapolis one of the five western cities in Northern Africa (Pentapolis, Apollonia, Bitolmais, Toshira, and Birnis). St Mark's parents were wealthy but as a result of barbarian tribes lost most of their wealth having to depart for the safety of Jerusalem. At that time this family was not aware of the plan of God waiting upon St Mark in Jerusalem. According to the book, "Lamp of Darkness" St Mark lived about 89 years and 5 months. St Mark was martyred on April 26, 68 AD. With this in perspective, it can be calculated that St Mark was approximately 21 years of age at the time of the Lord Jesus Christ's birth. The length of time in which St Mark spent upon the Alexandrian See was 7 years, 8 months, and 1 day. St Mark was one of the seventy apostles and was the apostle whom was appointed by the Lord Jesus Christ to eat the Passover meal at his home. His home which was known as Zion's room was also the place where the apostles gathered together following the Crucifixion, the place where the Holy Spirit came upon the apostles as tongues of fire on the Pentecost, and also it is also considered the first church in the entire world. The Holy Gospel recorded the following about our first pope, the apostle, St Mark: (1) The Lord Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover with His holy disciples in St Mark's home (Matthew 26:18, Mark 14:13, and Luke 12:10-12). (2) Appearance of the Lord after His Glorious Resurrection to the apostles happened in St Mark's home (John 20:19, Luke 24:33). (3) The coming upon the disciples of the Holy Spirit happened in St Mark's home (Acts 1:13 and 2:1). (4) St Mark was with St Barnabas and St Paul 47 AD (Acts 11:27-30). (5) From 47 AD to 49 AD, the first preaching trip involving the apostles Paul, Barnabas, Mark, Seleucia, Salamis, Paphos and Perga in Pamphylia (Acts 13:1-13). (6) 50-52 AD St Mark departed with St Barnabas to Cyprus (Acts 15:39). (7) St Mark was with St Paul in Colosse (Colossians 4:10) in 61 AD. (8) 64 AD-66 AD St Mark departed to Rome for St Paul (2 Timothy 4:11). (9) When the first Council was held in Jerusalem under the leadership of St James the Bishop of Jerusalem, to discuss the acceptance of the Gentiles without circumcision, St Mark attended. (10) After St Mark's preaching with St Barnabas and St Paul, the Holy Spirit led him to preach on his own which brought the saint to Egypt. St Mark is recognized by all Christians world-wide as one of the four Evangelists who wrote a Holy Gospel. In addition, for our beloved Coptic Church, St Mark is also our preacher, our founder of the Coptic Church, and our first Pope of the See of St Mark. Through St Mark, the prophecy spoken of in the Holy Book of Isaiah the Prophet has been fulfilled, "**...there will be an altar for the Lord in Egypt and a pillar at its boundaries...**"

St Mark was also one of the seventy apostles; therefore our Coptic Church can be rightly termed "apostolic" as it was indisputably founded by one of the original apostles. Although the

disciples and the apostles are considered ecumenical or universal bishops for the Church in general, every church refers to her initial preacher as her first bishop and as such, St Mark is the Coptic Church's first bishop of the See of Alexandria. St Mark attended the first ecumenical council held in Jerusalem in 51 AD to discuss the topic of the relevance of circumcision prior to baptism. The holy apostles agreed at this ecumenical council to accept the Gentiles into the Church without circumcision before baptism (Acts 15:23-30). Following the council held in Jerusalem, St Mark and St Barnabas journeyed to Cyprus (Acts 15:36-40) and there the Holy Spirit led St Mark to preach in the Five Western Cities in North Africa. Following St Mark's ministry in North Africa he then journeyed to Egypt. The date of this founding saints' arrival into Egypt was 55 AD. When St Mark came to Egypt, many pagan gods were being worshipped by the Egyptians. Some of the gods were considered to be national gods and other idols originated from Greece, Rome, Persia, Syria, and Babylonia. These gods included: (1) Rue: The god of the sun. Rue was considered by the pagans to be the source of light and warmth. Heliopolis "Ainshams" was the center of its worship and from this center gradually its false teachings were spread throughout all of Egypt. (2) Amon: The invisible god. Tibha was the center of worship for this particular god. Later during the Egyptian state, Amon was combined with Rue and the combined worship came to be termed Amon Rua. (3) Osiris: The messenger god of love and peace among the people. This god of peace and love originated from Syria. (4) Diana or Artemis: The god of hunting. (5) Khnoum: The creator god. Tibha was also the center of worship for Khnoum. (6) Anhita: A popular god which came from Persia. Also when St Mark journeyed to Egypt, Egypt was considered the second greatest city in the world. Second only to Rome, was Egypt. Egypt was widely accepted though as first in the world for science, art, philosophy, and architecture. Its school was recognized world-wide as well as the professors who taught within it. For all those seeking knowledge and philosophy Egypt was the place to come.

In Alexandria there were Greek philosophers and scholars, Jewish scholars and teachers of Scriptures, and Persian wise men. In addition to all this were the priests. In Alexandria, there was the famous Alexandrian Library considered as one of the Seven Wonders of the World. This famed library contained millions of volumes of books of the greatest philosophers and scholars in the world for that time frame. The Alexandrian population was approximately 600,000. The most famous temple in Alexandria among the School and Library was Serabium. In this temple the idol Serabis was worshipped by most of the population. The Holy Book of Acts 6:9 tells that St Stephen went in dialogue with a Jerusalem Council and that some of the council members were from the City of Alexandria. Also, Apollo, one of the greatest preachers in the early Church was from the City of Alexandria as denoted by the Holy Book of Acts 18:24. Not only was Alexandria the center of civilization for the world, it was also the center for moral corruption. Politically, Egypt was a Roman state under the direct control of the Roman emperor. Alexandrians revolted against the Roman authority of Augustus Caesar. Caesar sent a Roman military army of 20,000 to Alexandria to put a halt to the revolution. The emperor was in dire need of Egypt's wheat. Putting an end to the revolution would not be the only act of Augustus Caesar. He also gave social and religious freedom to the Jews residing in Alexandria. This inequality gave rise to many disputes and fights among the Jews and Alexandrians. This is the state of the wonderful City of Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great in 331 BC, when St Mark arrived to preach and teach the message of salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. Upon the

first day of his arrival, St Mark wandered about the streets of Alexandria until his worn shoes fell apart. St Mark stopped at the first shoemaker shop he approached to have his shoes repaired. The shoemaker's name was "Ananias" and this shoemaker would later become the second pope of Alexandria. While Ananias was working to repair St Mark's worn shoes, the needle in which he was using to repair the soles of St Mark's shoes injured his hand and Ananias cried out, "Oh God, the only One!" At this exclamation, St Mark spit upon the ground, made mud, and placed the mixture upon Ananias finger and healed it immediately. Discussion ensued between St Mark and Ananias related to his One God. Ananias confessed to St Mark that he had only heard of such God but did not actually know of this One God. St Mark begins to preach to Ananias about the One God, the Lord Jesus Christ. The message of salvation through the Holy Cross was taught and welcomed by Ananias and his family. Ananias home is considered the first Church in the land of Egypt. Within a few short years Christianity had spread throughout the land of Egypt. Christianity not only spread and was accepted, through its teachings the behavior and morals of the Egyptian people would also change for the better. Philon, the Jewish scholar, stated, "St Mark and his disciples did not care about worldly matters, but cared about God's Glory and His salvation to all people." The Egyptians became united in true "Agape" love and a heavenly peace. There was no rich or poor classification among the people. Everyone lived an economical life; the rich gave unto the poor so everyone could be considered rich with God. The people ate only one time per day after sunset. Some would fast for three to five days without food. There is disagreement among scholars about the possible visit of St Peter the apostle to St Mark in Babylon's fort where there was a great Jewish colony and from which St Peter wrote his first Holy Epistle which concludes with this verse, ***"...she was in Babylon, elect together with you, greets you and so does Mark my son."*** (I Peter 5:13) Some scholars believe this means Rome. Regardless, there is nothing to contraindicate the possibility of St Peter's visit to Babylon. Further, some scholars suggest St Simon the Canaanite visited Egypt as well. To establish the newly growing Church, St Mark, ordained Ananias as a bishop and along with this ordained twelve priests and seven deacons. St Mark at this particular time also wrote his Divine Liturgy, now referred to as the "Divine Liturgy of St Cyril." St Mark first wrote the Divine Liturgy in Greek then it was translated to the language of Boharic Coptic. Three of Ananias's assistants were Mlios, Kardanos, and Primos.

St Mark founded the School of Alexandria to counteract the idolatrous school in Alexandria which had become world famous for its philosophy, science, medicine, mathematics, and astronomy. St Mark wrote the Apostles Teachings, Rituals, and Traditions that were specific for the See of Alexandria. Following all of this, St Mark departed Alexandria in 65 AD to further his ministry in the Name of the Lord Jesus Christ in the Five Western Cities in Northern Africa. After continuing to strengthen the churches in North Africa, St Mark at St Paul's request joined the apostle in Rome to help in preaching and teaching those there. St Paul stated in the two Holy Books, II Timothy 4:11 and Philemon 1:24 that St Mark was indeed useful for the ministry. Bishop Ananias, his priests and deacons were known for their honesty, for their ministry, and taught through Egypt. They established the first church in Bokalia now known as "St Mark Church in Alexandria." St Mark returned to Alexandria around 67 AD, where he wrote his Holy Gospel in Greek for the believers in Alexandria.

The great success of St Mark's evangelism led to persecution and torture of Christians in Alexandria by the idolatrous governors and people of the city. St Mark was one of the ones who would ultimately be put to death because of his ardent belief in the Lord Jesus Christ. On 29 Baramoudah (April 16) 68 AD, St Mark celebrated the Glorious Resurrection Feast with the believers which coincided with the Feast of Serabis, as previously mentioned, the most famous of idols worshipped in the City of Alexandria. The idolaters angrily broke into the church and attacked St Mark while the saint was praying the Divine Liturgy of the Glorious Feast of the Resurrection at the altar. The crowds of idolaters tied up St Mark with a band around his neck and dragged him into the streets of Alexandria. From one street to another they inhumanely dragged the saint crying and screaming "Drag him to the bulls' house." The "bulls' house" refers to the Bokalia area where the Coptic Church was later built in his honor, known as "St Marks' Church in Alexandria." They continued to torture the bleeding St Mark until finally he was thrown into prison. The Lord Jesus Christ through a great Heavenly light appeared to St Mark and healed him saying, "Be strong My beloved apostle, your heart will be filled with joy. Be in peace as tomorrow you will have the crown of martyrdom and be with Me in the Heavenly Jerusalem." The following day, the idolaters tied up the apostle once again with a neck bond and dragged his body through the streets as they had done before. This time they drug his body until his head separated from his body. Upon this day, St Mark received three crowns, the crown of apostolicity, the crown of evangelism, and the crown of martyrdom. All the while during his torture, St Mark prayed, "Thank you Lord because you have allowed me to suffer persecution and torture for Your Holy Name." St Mark near his death requested that the Lord forgive those who brought about his death and then departed from his earthly existence. After St Mark's martyrdom, the idolaters hurriedly brought firewood to burn his body. A great wind suddenly blew, a great rain suddenly fell and the idolaters in fear scattered. St Mark's disciples came and affectionately carried his holy body and buried him in the Church which carries his name in Bokalia. St Mark's blood became the first shed in Egypt and millions of martyrs would follow his example and chose earthly death rather than deny their Lord Jesus Christ. This is written in the History of Patriarchs by Bishop Severus; St Mark was martyred on the last day of Baramoudah the year 35 following the Lord Jesus Christ's Glorious Resurrection on 24 of Nissan. The Coptic Church celebrates his martyrdom on Baramoudah. A few centuries later, St Mark's body was stolen by Italian traders and taken to Italy where it remained for hundreds of years. His Holiness Pope Cyril the Sixth succeeded in returning St Marks' holy body to Egypt on 17 Baounah, June 24, 1969.

3. St. Luke the Apostle

He is the 3rd Evangelist, the writer of the Holy Book of Acts and the partner of St. Paul in his ministry trips. Ibevanios mentioned that St. Luke was one of the seventy disciples and one of Emmaus' disciples. Other scholars mentioned that he was a Gentile from Antioch and converted to Christianity very early around 36 AD by one of the disciples. He met St. Paul in his 2nd ministry trip on his way to Macedonia and accompanied St. Paul to Philippi (Acts 16:9, 16:6-8, 16:10). After the founding of the Philippian Church, St. Luke remained there to take care of it until he met again St. Paul on his last trip to Jerusalem. He accompanied St. Paul in his

imprisonment in Caesarea and Rome till the martyrdom of St. Paul. In reality, St. Luke was a very humble person, although he wrote his Holy Gospel and the Holy Book of Acts he did not mention much about himself. He remained honest and faithful to St. Paul as he mentioned to St. Timothy *“Luke alone is with me”* (2 Timothy 4:11). He was martyred in his 84th year in Elaea in Greece and his relics with those of St. Andrew the Apostle were transferred to the Apostles’ Church in Constantinople as mentioned by St. Jerome. St. Luke wrote his Holy Gospel based on what he heard from witnesses as St. Mary the Virgin to a well-to-do-man from Alexandria, called Theophilus about 70 AD. He wrote the Holy Book of Acts recording the history of the Church beginning from the Ascension of the Lord to the 2nd year of Paul’s imprisonment in Rome and so he is the true father of the history of the Christian Church. He was a physician (Colossians 4:14) and so he presented the Lord Jesus Christ in his Holy Gospel as the true physician for the human race and the true Savior of the world. Also, he was painter and to him it belongs the honor of painting the first portrait of St. Mary the Virgin.

The Apostles’ Assistants

1. St. Timothy

St. Timothy was a disciple to St. Paul and his accompanier in his trips of ministry. The first time to be mentioned was in the Holy Book of Acts at the beginning of the second ministry trip (Acts 16:1). He was from Lystra in Galatia of Asia Minor. His father was Greek and his mother and grandmother were righteous Jews (2 Timothy 1:5). And so since his childhood he grew in the way of righteousness and piety *“and that from childhood you have known the holy scriptures which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus”* (2 Timothy 3:15). As he ardently believed in the ministry of St. Paul so St. Paul used to call him his son in the faith (1 Corinthians 4:17, 1 Timothy 1:2, and 2 Timothy 1:2). St. Paul chose him as his fellow in his trips and his helper in the ministry because of his righteousness and gifts. St. Paul circumcised him to prepare him for the ministry among Jews. He went with St. Paul to Phrygia, Galatia, Taroas, Philippi, Ephesus, Macedonia, and Corinth (2 Corinthians 1:1, Romans 16:21, Acts 20:3-4). He followed St. Paul in his last trip to Jerusalem (1 Corinthians 16:3). He was with St. Paul in his imprisonment in Rome as he was mentioned in the Holy Epistles that St. Paul wrote from jail (Philippians 1:1, Colossians 1:1, and Philemon 1:1). He was ordained a Bishop for Ephesus (1 Timothy 1:18) and so St. Paul wrote two Holy Epistles to him about the duties of the priests in the ministry. St. Paul praised him for his wisdom and righteousness (2 Timothy 1:4, 1 Timothy 5:23). St. Paul called him *“my fellow worker (Romans 16:21)”*, *“Our brother and minister of God and our fellow laborer in the Gospel of Christ (1 Thessalonians 3:2)”*, *“A true son in the faith (1 Timothy 1:2)”*, *“the beloved son (2 Timothy 1:2)”*, and *“my beloved and faithful son in the Lord (1 Corinthians 4:17)”*. It is mentioned by tradition that St. Timothy lived to a very old age and was martyred in Ephesus 97 AD by pagans.

2. St. Titus

He was one of St. Paul's faithful disciples and he was mentioned in the 2nd Corinthians, Galatians, and Titus Epistles. He was a Greek Gentile (Galatians 2: 1& 3) and converted to Christian faith by St. Paul's ministry and so St. Paul called him his son in the faith (Titus 1:4). He joined the Council of Jerusalem 50 AD (Galatians 2:1). St. Paul sent him two times to Corinth (2 Corinthians 2:13) and (2 Corinthians 8: 16-17, 12:18). He joined St. Paul in his 2nd imprisonment in Rome (2 Timothy 4:10). St. Paul ordained him as a Bishop for Crete and called him fellow and the laborer with him (2 Corinthians 8:23). He lived to a very old age and departed and was buried in Crete and so he is their intercessor.

3. St. Silas

The Apostles in Jerusalem sent him with Barnabas and Paul to Antioch, Syria and Cilicia to declare the decisions of the Council (Acts 15:22). He was a prophet (Acts 15:22-23). He had the Roman citizenship. He was a fellow for St. Paul in his second ministry trip after Barnabas had left him (Acts 15:40, 15:18-22). He followed St Paul in Macedonia and Philippi (Acts 16:12-39) where they suffered persecution and imprisoned there and the Lord freed them and so the Philippian Jailer believed (Acts 16:25-34). He followed St. Paul to Thessalonica then to Athens (Acts 17:13-15), and Corinth (Acts 18:5). He was martyred in Macedonia.

Conclusion: The 12 disciples of Christ started and established the church on the Day of Pentecost by the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Many stories of the early church are found in the Book of Acts. The disciples preached mostly in Asia, Turkey, Greece, Rome, Israel, and parts of the Middle East. They were all martyred except St. John the Apostle and all lived in the first century between 0 AD and 100 AD. The Apostolic Father lived from the end of the first century to the middle of the second century, approximately from 100 AD – 180 AD. The Apostolic Fathers were disciples of the Disciples of Christ and will be discussed in future lessons.

Verse to Remember: “Now I praise you, brethren, that you remember me in all things and keep the traditions just as I delivered *them* to you” (1 Corinthians 11:2)

Other Bible verses about tradition include:

Deuteronomy 5:32-33 - You shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God has commanded you: you shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left

Matthew 15:3 - But he answered and said unto them, Why do you also transgress the

commandment of God by your tradition?

Colossians 2:8 - Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ.

2 Thessalonians 2:14-15 – Where unto he called you by our gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Thessalonians 3:6 - Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us.

1 Timothy 1:4 - Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith

1 Timothy 4:7 - But refuse profane and old wives' fables, and exercise yourself unto godliness.

2 Timothy 4:2-4 - Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

2. EARLY CHURCH HISTORY – PART II

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES: Please see the References from Part I.

VERSE To Remember: “When I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you, which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also” (2 Timothy 1:5)

INTRODUCTION: In this lesson, we will examine the history of the church in the fourth and fifth centuries, and in particular, discuss the Ecumenical councils in more detail. For the first four centuries, the church was one, with no division. The first problem occurred in 451 AD at the 4th Ecumenical council of Chalcedon. Today, there are over 2600 groups who lay claim to being the direct descendants of the church described in the New Testament. But for the first four centuries of the Christian era, from the foundation of the Church to the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D., the Christian Church was essentially one. Four historic Patriarchal centers - Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome - were established in the first century, and Constantinople in the fourth; yet all these five centers formed a cohesive whole of the Christian Church and were in full communion with each other.

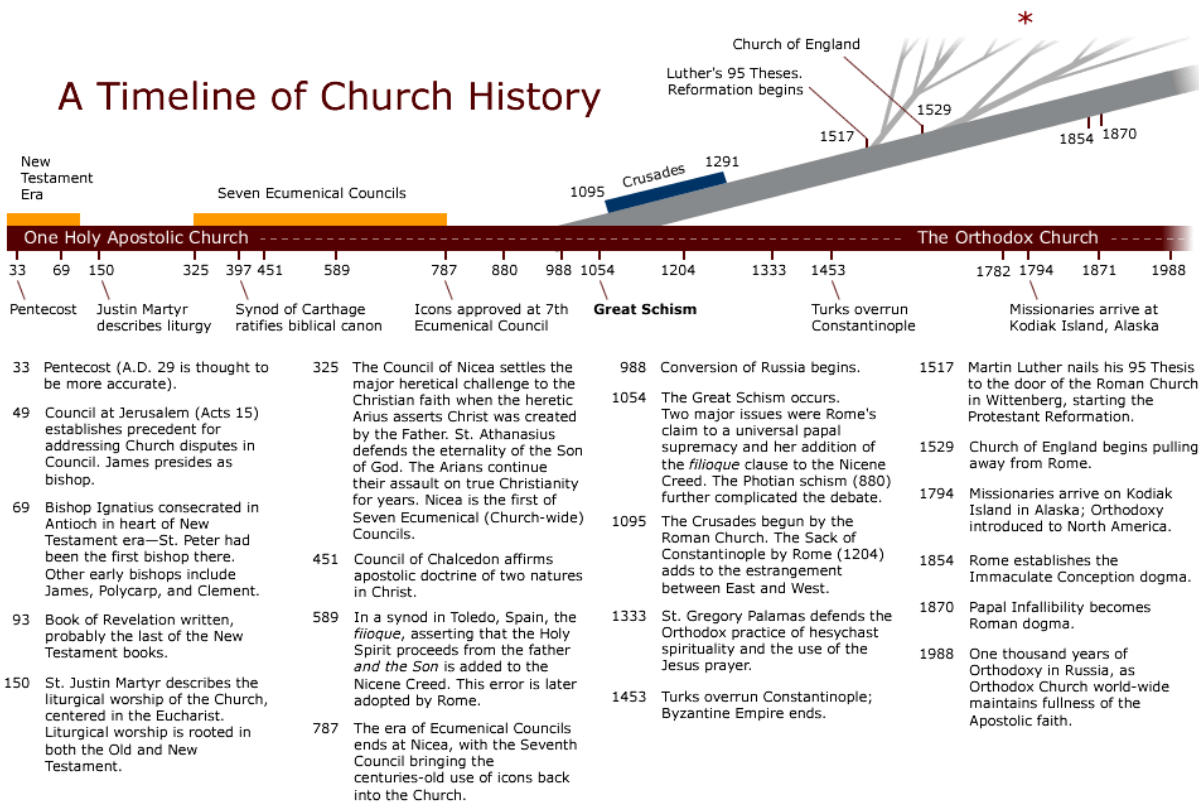
There were heretical or schismatic groups going their own way, but the Church, through ecumenical councils, could keep her unity and settle the orthodox faith. The first Council was held in 325 A.D. at Nicea when representative bishops of all Christians, traditionally numbering 318, assembled to discuss the heresy of Arius who taught against the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ. The Nicene Council condemned Arianism and gave Christianity a creed which has survived to this day. Behind the Nicene triumph stood St. Athanasius the Great, the twentieth Coptic Pope of Alexandria, Egypt (died 373 A.D.), who, still a young deacon, came to the Council with his old patriarch, Alexander. The final victory of orthodoxy was achieved at the second ecumenical Council of Constantinople in 381 A.D., when 150 bishops condemned another heresy. Macedonius claimed that the Holy Spirit is not the eternal Spirit of God but a created one. The council completed the Nicene Creed asserting that the Holy Spirit is the Life-giving Lord Who proceeds from the Father. The following century saw St. Cyril the Great of Alexandria (died 444 AD), who presided in 431 AD at the Council of Ephesus (3rd Ecumenical council) where 200 bishops condemned Nestorius, the formidable Patriarch of Constantinople, who rejected the term Theotokos, the Mother of God, in regard to the Holy Virgin St. Mary. This idea led to the inference of the dual nature of the Lord Jesus; His divinity and His humanity.

This dualism was decreed in the Council of Chalcedon in 451 A.D (4th Ecumenical council) , in spite of the objection of the Coptic Pope Dioscorus. Thence, the Church was divided into two groups: Rome and Constantinople, who accepted the doctrine of two united natures, on one side, and Alexandria and Antioch who held the belief of one nature out of two natures of the Incarnate Lord.

In 589 A.D., in the synod of Toledo, Spain, the Filioque, a doctrine claims that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son, was added to the Nicaeo-Constantinopolitan Creed. This error was later adopted by Rome. The addition of the filioque clause, and the issue of Rome's claim to a universal (Catholic) papal supremacy, caused a schism between Rome (surnamed the Roman Catholic Church) and Constantinople (surnamed the Greek Orthodox Church). Another schism took place in 1517 A.D. when Martin Luther nailed his 95 Theses to the door of the Roman Church of Wittenberg, Germany, starting the Protestant Reformation. Then Protestantism was divided into hundreds of Churches holding different doctrines. Finally, in the 1990's, the two Orthodox families, the Chalcedonian Churches including the Greek, Russian, Ukrainian, Serbian..., and the Non-Chalcedonian Churches including the Coptic, Syrian,

Armenian, Ethiopian,... came to an agreement of one faith that The Lord is perfect in His divinity as well as in His humanity, and the unity between both natures is real. By the great effort of His Holiness Pope Shenouda III, the recent Coptic Pope, and His fellow Orthodox Patriarchs, this agreement is achieved and the unity of Orthodoxy is accomplished, yet, it will be decreed formally by the orthodox Synods in the near future.

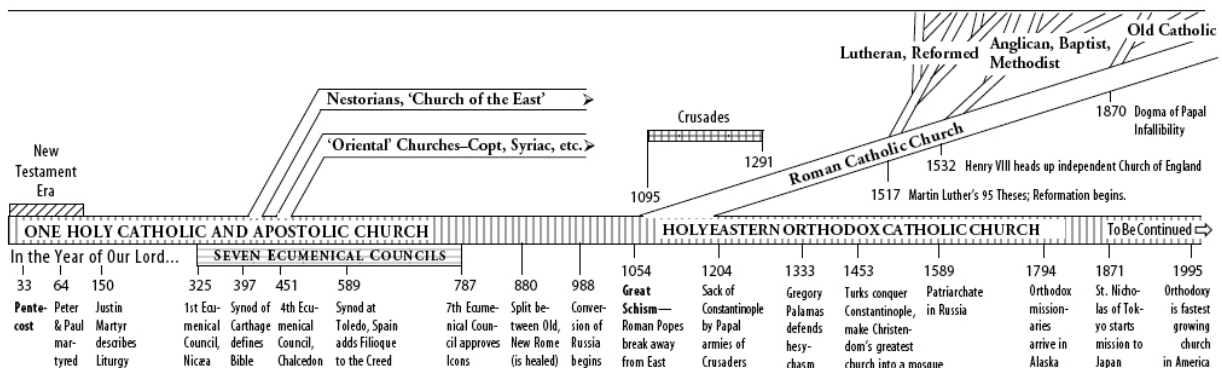
To better understand the timeline of church history, it is helpful to look at the following figures:



* According to the Dictionary of Christianity in America [Protestant] (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1990): "As of 1980 David B. Barrett identified 20,800 Christian denominations worldwide . . ." ("Denominationalism," page 351).

TIMELINE OF CHURCH HISTORY

inspired by a timeline from Conciliar Press

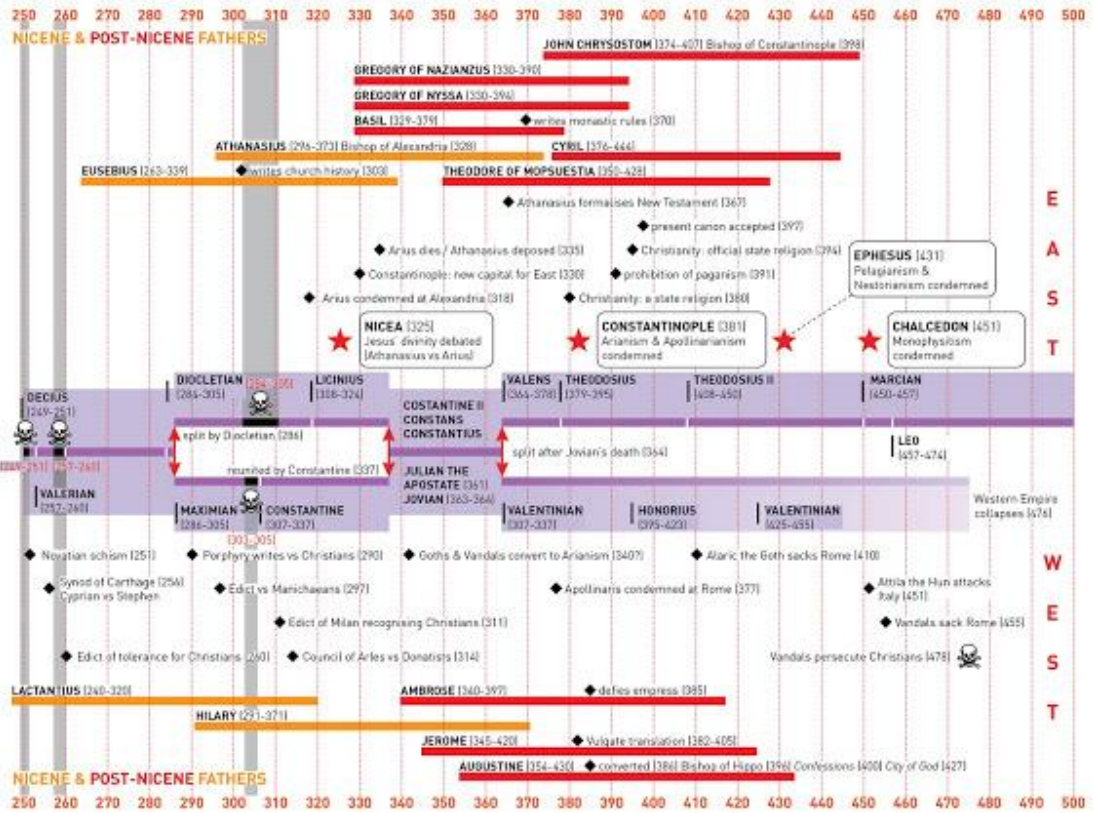


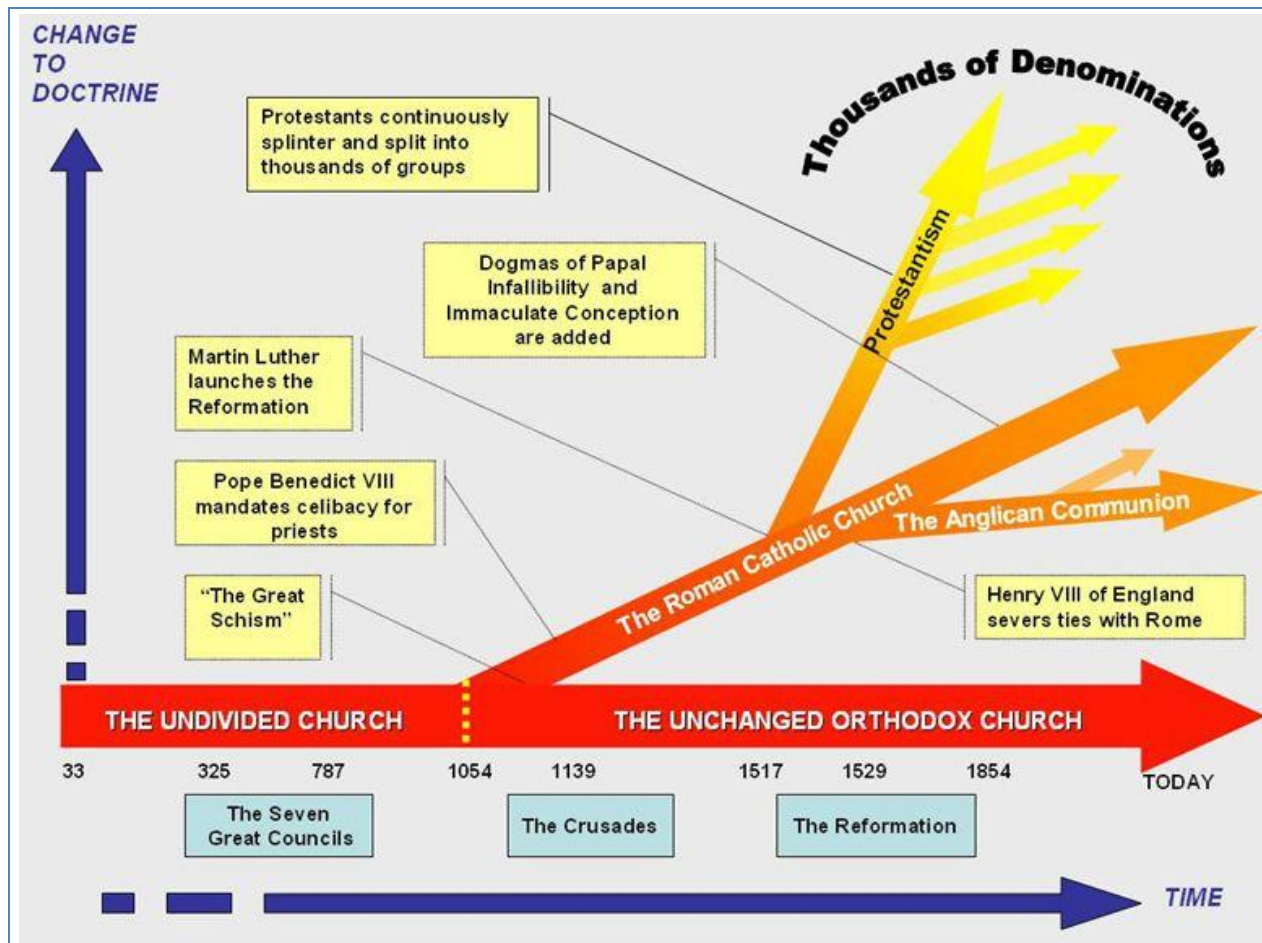
Note: All Christian churches can be traced back historically to the Orthodox Church founded by the Lord Jesus Christ.

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EARLY CHURCH HISTORY AD 250 - 500





The Ecumenical Councils

The word Ecumenical means "general in extent or influence in promoting worldwide Christian unity". The Ecumenical councils are a very important part of the history of the early church. They also play a very large part in the history of the Coptic Orthodox Church. It was at the Fourth Ecumenical Council that the Coptic Church was accused of being Monophysite, that is, Christ only has a divine nature. Thus, the accusation was that His two natures were dissolved and blended into one: the divine. This characterization of Coptic Orthodoxy is, of course, completely incorrect.

There were a total of seven Ecumenical councils. The Coptic Church only accepts the first three of them.

1. First Ecumenical Council: This took place in Nicea, Asia Minor in 325 A.D., under Emperor Constantine the Great. 318 Bishops were present.

The Arian Heresy: Arius denied the divinity of Christ. His argument was that if Jesus was born, then there was a time when He did not exist. If He became God, then there was a time when He was not. Believers of this heresy were called Arian and the heresy itself was called Arianism. The Council declared Arius's teaching a heresy, unacceptable to the Church, and decreed that Christ is God. He is equal to God the Father and that the three persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) are equally eternal (uncreated) and equally divine.

The Creed - The first part of the seven articles of the Nicene Creed were ratified at the First Ecumenical Council, ending with "...whose Kingdom has no end." This is the same Creed that we recite in the Divine Liturgy today.

Defenders of Orthodoxy for 1st Ecumenical Council:

i) **St. Athanasius the Great** (297 - 373 A.D.) - he was a fearless champion of Orthodoxy. He spent sixteen of his 45 years as Bishop of Alexandria in exile. He was one of the most profound theologians, and is recognized as one of the great Fathers of the Church.

ii) **St. Basil the Great (330 - 379 A.D.)** - A natural leader and organizer who spoke and wrote against Arianism. He founded hospitals, orphanages, and welfare agencies. He revised and updated the Divine Liturgy. He made a great contribution to Monasticism, and he was one of the famous Cappadocian Fathers, together with St. Gregory of Nyssa (his brother) and St. Gregory of Nazianzus the Theologian (his close friend). The Cappadocians, along with St. Athanasius the Great, laid the pattern for formulating the doctrines related to the mystery of the Holy Trinity. St. Basil the Great, along with St. Gregory of Nazianzus (the Theologian) and St. John Chrysostom are called the Three Hierarchs.

2. Second Ecumenical Council: This took place in Constantinople in 381 A.D., under Emperor Theodosius the Great. 150 Bishops were present.

The Macedonian Heresy: Macedonius, somewhat like Arius, was misinterpreting the Church's teaching on the Holy Spirit. He taught that the Holy Spirit was not a person but rather simply a "power" of God. Therefore, the Holy Spirit was inferior to the Father and the Son. The Council condemned Macedonius's teaching and defined the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. The Council decreed that there was one God in three persons (hypostases): Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Creed: The holy fathers added the last five articles to the Creed, starting with "Yes we believe in the Holy Spirit and the life of the age to come."

Defenders of Orthodoxy for 2nd Ecumenical Council:

i) **St. Gregory of Nazianzus, the Theologian (329 - 390 A.D.):** He was a scholar who studied in Athens with St. Basil the Great. He became Patriarch of Constantinople (379 A.D.) and presided at the Second Ecumenical Council. He was a poet and profound thinker. He wrote many poems, hymns, essays, and sermons.

ii) **St. Gregory of Nyssa (331 - 396 A.D.):** He was the younger brother of St. Basil the Great. He was a theologian who delved deeply into the truths of the Faith.

iii) **St. John Chrysostom (345 - 407 A.D.):** He was born and educated in Antioch (Syria). He became Patriarch of Constantinople in 398 A.D. He is known for his eloquent and straightforward sermons. He is nick-named the Golden Mouth because of his great sermons. He was responsible for the revision of the Divine Liturgy. He died in exile.

3. **Third Ecumenical Council** - This took place in Ephesus, Asia Minor in 431 A.D., under Emperor Theodosius II (grandson of Theodosius the Great). 200 Bishops were present.

The Nestorian Heresy: This heresy concerned the nature of Jesus Christ, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity. Nestorius taught that the Virgin Mary gave birth to a man, Jesus Christ, not God the Logos (Word), the Son of God. The Logos only dwelled in Christ, as in a Temple. Christ therefore was only the "Bearer of God." Therefore, the Virgin Mary would not be the Mother of God, but rather the Mother of Christ. Thus, the Nestorian heresy taught that Christ was less than God and overemphasized the human nature of Christ at the expense of the divine.

Decision: The Council denounced Nestorius's teaching as erroneous. Our Lord Jesus Christ is one person, **not** two separate "people": the Man Jesus Christ and the Son of God, the Word. The Council decreed that our Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is complete God and complete man. The Virgin Mary is the Theotokos because she gave birth not to a man but to God who became man. The two natures (divine and human) that Christ took were united into one entity.

The Creed: The Council declared the text of the Creed decreed at the First and Second Ecumenical Councils to be complete and forbade any change (addition or deletion).

4. **Fourth Ecumenical Council:** This was held in Chalcedon, near Constantinople in 451 A.D., under Emperor Marcian. 630 Bishops were present.

Monophysite Controversy: The Council was concerned once again with the nature of Christ. There was a misunderstanding that Christ's human nature dissolved itself in His divine nature, and thus in reality Christ has only one nature, the Divine. The term Monophysite means one nature. Thus, Monophysitism overemphasized the divine nature of Christ, at the expense of the human. Monophysitism is the exact opposite of Nestorianism.

Decision: The Council condemned Monophysitism and proclaimed that Christ has two complete natures: the divine and the human, as defined by the previous councils. These two natures function without confusion, are not divided, not separate (against Nestorius), and at no time did they undergo any change.

Coptic Orthodox Church Accused: At the Fourth Ecumenical Council, the Coptic Orthodox Church was accused of being Monophysite, which is of course not true. The Coptic Orthodox Church believes that Christ has two natures (human and divine), He is fully man and fully God, and His two natures are mysteriously united into one entity (nature), where this unified entity does not favor one nature over another, but rather this united entity is fully man and fully God.

The Coptic Orthodox Church does **not** accept the fourth Ecumenical Council. As a result of this accusation, there was a split in the Orthodox Churches, into Oriental Orthodoxy and Eastern Orthodoxy. Another name is Non-Chalcedonian and Chalcedonian Churches. The Coptic Orthodox Church is an Oriental (Non-Chalcedonian) Orthodox Church.

The Oriental Orthodox Churches include

1. Coptic Orthodox Church
2. Eritrian Orthodox Church
3. Ethiopian Orthodox Church
4. Indian Orthodox Church
5. Syrian Orthodox Church
6. Armenian Orthodox Church

The Eastern Orthodox Church includes

1. Greek Orthodox
2. Russian Orthodox
3. Romanian Orthodox
4. British Orthodox
5. Serbian Orthodox
6. Syrian Orthodox
7. Ukrainian Orthodox
8. Bulgarian Orthodox;
9. Antiochian Orthodox
10. The Church of Jerusalem
11. The Orthodox Church in America

Fifth Ecumenical Council: This was held in Constantinople in 553 A.D., under Emperor Justinian the Great. 165 Bishops were present.

Nestorian Heresy and Eutychian Controversy: The Council was called in hope of putting an end to the Nestorian heresy and Eutychian (Monophysite) controversy. The Council confirmed the Church's teaching regarding the two natures of Christ (human and divine) and condemned certain writings with Nestorian learnings. Emperor Justinian himself confessed his Orthodox faith.

The Coptic Orthodox Church **does not** accept the Fifth Ecumenical Council.

Sixth Ecumenical Council: This took place in Constantinople in 680 A.D., under Emperor Constantine IV. 170 Bishops were present.

The Monothelite Controversy: It concerned the last attempt to compromise with the Monophysites. The Monophysites believed that although Christ did have two natures (divine and human), He nevertheless acted as God only. In other words, His divine nature made all of the decisions and His human nature only carried and acted them out, hence the name "Monothelism" (mono = one, thesis = will).

The Councils Pronouncement: Christ had two natures with two activities: as God working miracles, rising from the dead and ascending into heaven; as Man, performing ordinary acts of daily life. Each nature exercises its own free will. Christ's divine nature had a specific task to perform and so did His human nature. Each nature performed those tasks set forth without being confused, subjected to any change, or working against each other. The two distinct natures were mystically united into the one Divine Person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Coptic Orthodox Church **does not** accept the Sixth Ecumenical Council.

Defender of Orthodoxy: - St. Maximus the Confessor (580 - 662 A.D.). A simple but enlightened monk. He died in exile.

Quinisext Ecumenical Council: This was held in Constantinople in 692 A.D.

Legislative Matters: It is regarded as supplementing the Fifth and Sixth Ecumenical Councils, hence, it is called "Quinisext". Its work was purely legislative. It ratified 102 canons and the decisions of the previous Ecumenical Councils.

Doctrinal and Disciplinary Canons: It Sanctioned the so-called "Eighty-five Apostolic Canons" and approved the disciplinary decisions (canons) of certain regional Councils. The Council added a series of disciplinary decisions or canons to the existing ones. The "Quinisext" Council laid the foundation for the Orthodox Canon Law.

The Coptic Orthodox Church **does not** accept the Quinisext Ecumenical Council.

7. **Seventh Ecumenical Council:** This was held in Asia Minor in 787 A.D., under Empress Irene. 367 Bishops were present.

The Iconoclast Controversy: This controversy centered around the use of icons in the Church and the controversy between the iconoclasts and the iconophiles. The Iconoclasts were suspicious of religious art. They demanded that the Church rid itself of such art and that it be destroyed or broken (as the term "iconoclast" implies). The Iconophiles believed that icons served to preserve the doctrinal teachings of the Church. They considered icons to be man's dynamic way of expressing the divine through art and beauty. The Iconoclast controversy was a form of Monophysitism: distrust and downgrading on the human side.

The Council's Proclamation: We define the holy icons, whether in color, mosaic, or some other material, should be exhibited in the holy churches of God, on the sacred vessels and liturgical vestments, on the walls, furnishings, and in houses and along the roads, namely the icons of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ, that of our Lady the Theotokos, those of the venerable angels and those of all the saintly people. Whenever these representations are contemplated, they will cause those who look at them to commemorate and love their prototype. We define also that they should be kissed and that they are an object of veneration and honor, but no of real worship, which is reserved for Him Who is the subject of our faith and is proper for the divine nature. He who venerates the icon, venerates in it the reality for which it stands.

The Coptic Orthodox Church **does not** accept the Seventh Ecumenical Council because it accuses the Copts of being Iconoclasts.

Defenders of Orthodoxy

i) **St. John of Damascus (675 - 745 A.D.):** John Mansur was educated at the Caliphate Court in Damascus. He held a position comparable to that of a Prime minister. He was a devout Orthodox Christian. He entered the Monastery of St. Sabbas in Palestine, where he wrote many poems, hymns, and treaties, one of which is called "An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith." This work is a systematic theological summary of all the basic doctrines of the first seven centuries, a monumental work which became a classic in Orthodox Theology.

The Triumph of Orthodoxy: An Regional Synod was called in Constantinople in 843 A.D., under Empress Theodora. The veneration of icons was solemnly proclaimed at the St. Sophia's Cathedral. Monks and clergy came in procession and restored the icons in their rightful place. The day was called "Triumph of Orthodoxy." Since that time, this event is commemorated yearly in the Greek Orthodox Church on the first Sunday of Lent, called the "Sunday of Orthodoxy."

Summary of the Seven Ecumenical Councils

Council	Place and Date	Decision
First Ecumenical Council	Nicea, Asia Minor, 325 A.D.	Formulated the first part of the Creed. Defining the divinity of the Son of God.
Second Ecumenical Council	Constantinople, 381 A. D.	Formulated the Second Part of the Creed, defining the divinity of the Holy Spirit.
Third Ecumenical Council	Ephesus, Asia Minor, 431 A.D.	Defining Christ as the Incarnate Word of God and the Virgin Mary as the Theotokos.
Fourth Ecumenical Council	Chalcedon, Asia Minor, 451 A. D.	Defined Christ as Perfect God and Perfect Man in One Person.
Fifth Ecumenical Council	Constantinople, 553 A.D.	Reconfirmed the Doctrines of the Trinity and Christ.
Sixth Ecumenical Council	Constantinople, 680 A.D.	Affirmed the True Humanity of Jesus by insisting upon the reality of His Human will and action.
Quinisext Council	Constantinople, 692 A.D.	Completed the 5th and 6th Ecumenical Councils.
Seventh Ecumenical Council	Nicea, Asia Minor, 787 A.D.	Affirmed the propriety of icons as genuine expressions of the Christian Faith.

CONCLUSION: The Ecumenical councils play a huge role in the history of the church. The Coptic Church only accepts the first three Ecumenical councils. In the 1990's, Pope Shenouda has much dialogue with the Eastern Orthodox

church on the Monophysite accusation and all agreed that there was a misunderstanding, and in fact all Orthodox churches (Eastern and Oriental) has the same theological and dogmatic beliefs about Jesus Christ: He has two distinct natures that are united into one nature. He is both full man and fully God.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: “Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw yourselves from every brother that walks disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received from us” (2 Thessalonians 3:6).

3. JUSTIN MARTYR

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES:

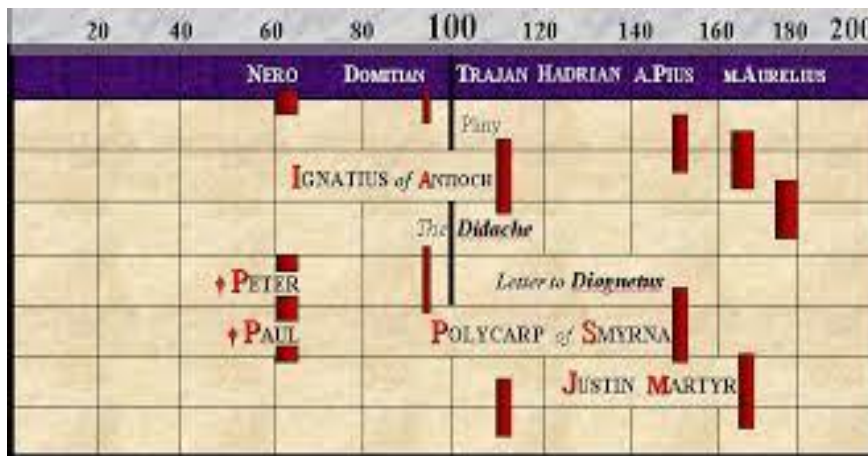
- 1) The Apostolic Fathers, edited by Jack Sparks.
- 2) The Ante-Nicene Fathers,
- 3) Coptic Southern Diocese website

VERSE: “Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. ⁵⁶ He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him” (John 6:54-56).

LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to discuss the life of one of the Apostolic Fathers, Saint Justin Martyr. We will examine his place in history of the church, his personal stories, his martyrdom, his contributions to church theology and defending the Orthodox faith, and other writings and letters on various topics. Justin Martyr is one of the pillars of the early church.

INTRODUCTION: As noted earlier, the period of the Apostolic Fathers covers approximately the period of 100 – 200 AD. **Justin Martyr** was born in Flavia Neapolis (modern Nablus), a Greek-speaking town in Syria within the Roman Empire in 100 AD. He is also known as **Saint Justin**, and he died in 165 AD. He was an early Christian Apologist, and is regarded as the foremost interpreter of the theory of the Logos (The Word, Christ) in the 2nd century. An Apologetic in Christianity is one who defends the faith by Christian logic, philosophy, and reasoning.



He spent much of his life defending the Christian faith to non-believers. He was martyred alongside some of his students, and is considered a saint by the Orthodox church. Most of his works are lost, but two apologies and a dialogue did survive. He had three main works:

1) First Apology

2) Second Apology

3) Dialogue with Trypho

The *First Apology*, his most well known text, passionately defends the morality of the Christian life, and provides various ethical and philosophical arguments to convince the Roman emperor, Antonious, to abandon the persecution of Christians. Further, he also indicates, as St Augustine did regarding the "true religion" that predated Christianity, that the "seeds of Christianity" (manifestations of the Logos acting in history) actually predated Christ's incarnation. This notion allows him to claim many historical Greek philosophers (including Socrates and Plato), in whose works he was well studied, as unknowing Christians. Justin Martyr also made massive contributions on the theology of the Eucharist in his first Apology.

Justin Martyr was born into a pagan family, and defined himself as a Gentile. His grandfather, Bacchius, had a Greek name, while his father, Priscus, bore a Latin name, which has led to speculations that his ancestors may have settled in Neapolis soon after its establishment or that they were descended from a Roman "diplomatic" community that had been sent there.

In the opening of the *Dialogue with Trypho*, Justin describes his early education, stating that his initial studies left him unsatisfied due to their failure to provide a belief system that would provide theological and metaphysical inspiration to their young pupil. He says he tried first the school of a Stoic philosopher, who was unable to explain God's being to him. He then attended a Peripatetic philosopher but was put off because the philosopher was too eager for his fee. Then he went to hear a Pythagorean philosopher who demanded that he first learn music, astronomy and geometry, which he did not wish to do. Subsequently, he adopted Platonism after encountering a Platonist thinker who had recently settled in his city.

He said, "And the perception of immaterial things quite overpowered me, and the contemplation of ideas furnished my mind with wings, so that in a little while I supposed that I had become wise; and such was my stupidity, I expected forthwith to look upon God, for this is the end of Plato's philosophy."

Sometime afterwards, he chanced upon an old man, a Syrian Christian, in the vicinity of the seashore, who engaged him in a dialogue about God and spoke of the testimony of the prophets as being more reliable than the reasoning of philosophers. The old man told him

“There existed, long before this time, certain men more ancient than all those who are esteemed philosophers, both righteous and beloved by God, who spoke by the Divine Spirit, and foretold events which would take place, and which are now taking place. They are called prophets. These alone both saw and announced the truth to men, neither reverencing nor fearing any man, not influenced by a desire for glory, but speaking those things alone which they saw and which they heard, being filled with the Holy Spirit. Their writings are still extant, and he who has read them is very much helped in his knowledge of the beginning and end of things, and of those matters which the philosopher ought to know, provided he has believed them. For they did not use demonstration in their treatises, seeing that they were witnesses to the truth above all demonstration, and worthy of belief; and those events which have happened, and those which are happening, compel you to assent to the utterances made by them, although, indeed, they were entitled to credit on account of the miracles which they performed, since they both glorified the Creator, the God and Father of all things, and proclaimed His Son, the Christ [sent] by Him: which, indeed, the false prophets, who are filled with the lying unclean spirit, neither have done nor do, but venture to work certain wonderful deeds for the purpose of astonishing men, and glorify the spirits and demons of error. But pray that, above all things, the gates of light may be opened to you; for these things cannot be perceived or understood by all, but only by the man to whom God and His Christ have imparted wisdom.”

Moved by the aged man's argument, Justin renounced both his former religious faith and his philosophical background, choosing instead to re-dedicate his life to the service of the Divine. His newfound convictions were only bolstered by the ascetic lives of the early Christians and the heroic example of the martyrs, whose piety convinced him of the moral and spiritual superiority of Christian doctrine. As a result, he thenceforth decided that the only option for him was to travel throughout the land, spreading the knowledge of Christianity as the "true philosophy." His conversion is commonly assumed to have taken place at Ephesus though it may have occurred anywhere on the road from Judaea to Rome. He then adopted the dress of a philosopher himself and traveled about teaching. During the reign of Antoninus Pius (138-161), he arrived in Rome and started his own school. Tatian was one of his pupils

LESSON BODY:

1. **The First Apology** – There are several themes in the first apology.

a) Addressing Criticisms of Christians:

In the early chapters of the *First Apology*, Justin discusses the principal criticisms of contemporary Christians; namely, atheism, immorality, and disloyalty to the Empire. He first argues that “the name” of Christianity by itself is not reason enough to punish or persecute, and he urges the Empire instead to only punish evil actions, writing, “For from a name neither approval nor punishment could fairly come, unless something excellent or evil in action can be shown about it. He then goes on to address the charges more directly, in which he argues that they are “atheists” toward Roman gods, but not to the “most true God. He acknowledges that some Christians have performed immoral acts, but urges officials to punish these individuals as evildoers rather than Christians. With this claim, Justin demonstrates his desire to separate the Christian name from the evil acts performed by certain individuals, lamenting how criminals tarnish the name of Christianity and are not true “Christians.” Finally, he addresses the alleged disloyalty to the Empire, discussing how Christians do seek to be members of another kingdom, but this kingdom is “of that with God” rather than a “human one.”

b) Jesus Christ as the Logos

Justin goes to great lengths in the *First Apology* to defend Christianity as a rational philosophy. He remarks at how Christianity can provide moral teaching for its followers, and how many of the Christian teachings parallel similar stories in pagan mythology, making it irrational for contemporary pagans to persecute Christians.

One of Justin’s most important themes involves his description of the logos, a philosophical concept of order of reason and knowledge. Throughout the *First Apology*, Justin argues that Jesus Christ is the incarnation of the Logos, which leads him to the proof that any individual who has spoken with reason, even those who lived before Christ, connected with the logos in the form of Christ, and is thus, in fact, a Christian.

This theme is paramount to understanding Justin’s defense of Christianity, and was a groundbreaking statement in Christian apologetic writing. The use of the term “logos” indicates that Justin likely drew upon prior philosophical teachings, but Justin makes the argument that these teachings represent only partial truth because they possess and are connected with only part of the overall logos. For Justin, Christianity represents the full truth (logos), meaning that Christianity is not only a meaningful philosophy, but it also completes and corrects prior thought to achieve the highest level of knowledge and reason.

c) Early Church Practices

The *First Apology* provides one of the most detailed accounts of contemporary Christian practice. Those that are baptized are “brought by us where there is water,” where they are “born again in the same manner of rebirth by which we ourselves were born again.” After the discussion of baptism, Justin describes the practice of the Eucharist, as well as the miracle of the Holy Spirit changing the bread and wine to the Body and Blood of Christ, in which “we have been

taught that the food eucharistized through the word of prayer that is from Him, from which our blood and flesh are nourished by change, is the flesh and blood of Jesus who became incarnate." Finally, he provides information on the weekly Sunday meetings of the congregation, consisting of readings from the Jewish prophets and "the memoirs of the apostles", prayers, and a meal.

2. The Second Apology

The *Second Apology* is supposed to have been written as a supplement to the First Apology of Justin Martyr, on account of certain proceedings which had in the meantime taken place in Rome before Lollius Urbicus as prefect of the city, which must have been between 150 and 157. The Apology is addressed to the Roman Senate.

Purpose of the writing

The Second Apology was meant to expose the real reasons behind the recent persecutions of Christians under Urbicus. It also tried to expose the utter irrationality of allegations and propaganda spread against the Christians.

Persecution of Christians under Urbicus

Justin recounts the story of a certain woman who on hearing the teachings of Jesus and having become a Christian refused to comply with the immoral practices of her husband. Because the disagreements were severe she desired to be divorced, but not being encouraged to do so, she continued in that relationship until one day when it became ethically unlivable, and she gave him a bill of divorce. The husband retaliated by bringing accusations against her before the Emperor. But when he couldn't do anything against her, he turned against the Christian leaders whom Urbicus the prefect began to severely persecute.

Demonic Control of the World

According to Justin, it is the demons who incite such hatred and evil against the people of God - the ones who know the Son of God and have responded by faith to the Word of God. These demons are the spirits of those offsprings born through union of spirits and women before the Flood and who were destroyed by the Flood. They control humans through magic arts, libations, and such intimidating systems that hold people in bondage. They are exorcised by the Christians from people in the Name of Jesus. All in whom the Word dwells have been hated; Heraclitus and Musonius for example.

Apology against Propaganda

The Christians were being accused of cannibalism and sexual immorality. Justin asks that if that was the case, and if Christians were pleasure-mongers, then why would they be fearless of death and faithful to what they believe. Their faithfulness to Christ in face of death proves that they are not pleasure seekers. On the contrary, it was the accusers who had a system of religion in which noble men sacrificed humans to gods such as Saturn and in which sexual immorality was openly practiced without shame. He cries out:

But would that even now someone would mount a lofty rostrum, and shout with a loud voice, "Be ashamed, be ashamed, ye who charge the guiltless with those deeds which yourselves openly commit, and ascribe things which apply to yourselves and to your gods to those who have not even the slightest sympathy with them. Be ye converted; become wise."

Appeal

He portrays the Christians as those who love God and His Word (Jesus Christ). He desires that this appeal be published that the world will not be superstitious about Christians and closes with the words:

And our doctrines are not shameful, according to a sober judgment, but are indeed more lofty than all human philosophy; and if not so, they are at least unlike the doctrines of the Sotadists and Philaenidians, and Dancers, and Epicureans and such other teachings of the poets, which all are allowed to acquaint themselves with, both as acted and as written. And henceforth we shall be silent, having done as much as we could, and having added the prayer that all men everywhere may be counted worthy of the truth. And would that you also, in a manner becoming piety and philosophy, would for your own sakes judge justly!

3. Dialogue with Trypho

The setting is presented as a chance meeting between Justin and Trypho in Ephesus. Justin had just converted to Christianity from a philosophical background and Trypho had just fled the disturbances in Palestine. When Justin suggests to Trypho to convert to Christianity, the dialogue becomes animated. Trypho criticizes Christians on a number of grounds, and Justin provides answers to each criticism.

In the opening of the "dialogue", Justin relates his vain search among the Stoics, Peripatetics, and Pythagoreans for a satisfying knowledge of God; his finding in the ideas of Plato wings for his soul, by the aid of which he hoped to attain the contemplation of the God-head; and his meeting on the sea-shore with an aged man who told him that by no human endeavor but only by divine revelation could this blessedness be attained, that the prophets had conveyed this revelation to man, and that their words had been fulfilled. Of the truth of this he assured

himself by his own investigation; and the daily life of the Christians and the courage of the martyrs convinced him that the charges against them were unfounded. So he sought to spread the knowledge of Christianity as the true philosophy.

In the *Dialogue*, Justin also wrote, "For I choose to follow not men or men's doctrines, but God and the doctrines [delivered] by Him. For if you have fallen in with some who are called Christians, but who do not admit this [truth], and venture to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; who say there is no resurrection of the dead, and that their souls, when they die, are taken to heaven; do not imagine that they are Christians." This passage is sometimes cited as evidence that the early church subscribed to the doctrine of soul sleep, though it is likely that Justin's emphasis is on saying that denial of the resurrection of the dead is what makes them non-Christian, especially considering that he claims that "even after death souls are in a state of sensation" in Chapter 18 of his *First Apology*.

Martyrdom: In the reign of Marcus Aurelius, after disputing with the cynic philosopher Crescens, he was denounced by the latter to the authorities, according to Tatian and Eusebius. Justin was tried, together with six companions, by Junius Rusticus, who was urban prefect from 163-167, and was beheaded in 165 AD.

Here is a record of his trial: The Prefect Rusticus says: Approach and sacrifice, all of you, to the gods. Justin says: No one in his right mind gives up piety for impiety. The Prefect Rusticus says: If you do not obey, you will be tortured without mercy. Justin replies: That is our desire, to be tortured for Our Lord, Jesus Christ, and so to be saved, for that will give us salvation and firm confidence at the more terrible universal tribunal of Our Lord and Saviour. And all the martyrs said: Do as you wish; for we are Christians, and we do not sacrifice to idols. The Prefect Rusticus read the sentence: Those who do not wish to sacrifice to the gods and to obey the emperor will be scourged and beheaded according to the laws. The holy martyrs glorifying God betook themselves to the customary place, where they were beheaded and consummated their martyrdom confessing their Saviour. The church of St. John the Baptist in Sacrofano, a few miles north of Rome, claims to have his relics.



CONCLUSION: St. Justin Martyr wrote three main works: i) First Apology, 2nd Apology, and the Dialogue with Trypho. In his Dialogue with Trypho, he talks about his conversion to Christianity. In his first two Apologies, he gives theological reasoning on Christ as the Logos, the Eucharist, Baptism, and the Resurrection. He also wrote about Christian persecution and demonic forces in the world. St. Justin was one of the main apologetics of the early church who was a great defender of the faith in these areas. He was beheaded in 165 AD.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: “Neither give heed to fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions, rather than godly edifying which is in faith.” (1 Timothy 1:4)

4. ST. CLEMENT OF ROME

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES:

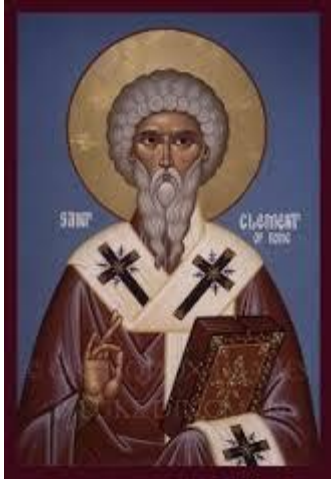
- 1) The Apostolic Fathers, edited by Jack Sparks.
- 2) The Ante-Nicene Fathers,
- 3) Coptic Southern Diocese website

VERSE: "Yes, and I ask you, my true companion, help these women since they have contended at my side in the cause of the gospel, along with Clement and the rest of my co-workers, whose names are in the book of life." (Philippians 4:3).

LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to learn about the life and works of St. Clement of Rome, and his martyrdom. He is one of the Apostolic fathers who is actually mentioned on St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians (Philippians 4:3).

INTRODUCTION: St. Clement of Rome is considered to be the first Apostolic Father of the Church. St. Clement was the third bishop of Rome as stated by St. Irenaeus. Eusebius the scholar further elaborates that St Clement became a bishop of Rome in the 12th year of Domitian's regime. So his bishop years extended from 93AD to 101AD. Tertullian, the scholar, and Ibrivianios bishop of Cyprus concur that St. Peter the apostle ordained St. Clement, the Roman, a bishop for Rome. In order to keep peace in the Roman Church, St. Clement, left the bishop's See to Linus, then to Anaklitos, and after Anaklitos he then returned to his See.



Peter
4 BC - 67



Clement
30 - 100



Paul
8 BC - 67



Justin Martyr
100 - 165



Ignatius
30 - 107



John
15 BC - 100



Irenaeus
120-200



Jesus
0 BC - 30



Polycarp
69-155

Lesson Body:

Scholars agree that St Clement had a direct relationship with St. Paul and St. Peter the apostles. Origen the scholar and Eusebius from Caesarea both concur that St. Paul the apostle eulogized St. Clement in his Epistle to the Philippians *“And I urge you also, true companion, help these women who labored with me in the Gospel, with Clement also, and the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the Book of Life (Philippians 4:3).”*

The Letter of St. Clement to the Corinthian Church:

The Letter of St. Clement, the Roman, to the Corinthian Church was accepted from the beginning as a document directly related to the Post Apostolic Era. Its style is similar to the style of the First Epistle to the Corinthians written by St. Paul the Apostle. Many problems developed in the Corinthian Church during the time of St. Paul due to believers not submitting and obeying the ordained legal bishop there having exiled him and some priests. St. Clement wrote his letter to this church focusing on the bond of love and Christian agape as mentioned by St. Paul in his First Epistle chapter 8. St. Clement began his Epistle exactly as St Paul in his Epistles with this beautiful verse, *“Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ be with you (I Corinthians 1:1) “from the Church of God in Rome to the Church of God in Corinth (1:2).”* St. Clement wrote, *“Who can describe the blessed bond God is love? Who is capable of describing its glory? No one can talk about the glory of Agape. Agape unites us with God. Love sustains everything. Love suffers long and is kind. No bride is in love. Love doesn’t allow envy. Love makes everything harmonious.”* *“When love rules, the good deeds will follow. Many of God’s gifts come to the believer who does good deeds before God.”* *“All the saints of the Old Testament became glorified before the Lord not by themselves, nor their good deeds, but by God’s will. Likewise, we are so called according to God’s will in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are holy not by ourselves, not by our wisdom, nor by our understanding, not by our good deeds that we did in a pure heart but by justification in the faith through our Lord Jesus Christ, through which all those saints were justified. Glory be to Him forever. So what should we do our brethren? Do we become lazy? Do we neglect love? No but with zeal and courage we should complete every good deed as the Lord and Creator of everything rejoiced with what He did.”* Also St. Clement in his teaching of eternal life and resurrection of bodies followed the same teachings as chapter 15 in the First Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians.

The Dogmatic Importance of the Letter:

St. Clement’s Letter has great dogmatic importance as it clearly declares the dogma of apostolic succession. St Clement, the Roman, stated that the Christian priesthood was of great importance as it is clearly an extension of the priesthood of the Old Testament. St. Clement further stated that the church is shepherded through her bishops and priests through apostolic succession and hierarchy, and it is of utmost importance for the church’s witness and continuity. *“The apostles preached the Gospel which they received from the Lord Jesus Christ who Himself brought the teachings from God the Father. Therefore if the apostles brought their teachings from the Lord Jesus Christ both teachings originated from God’s will. Likewise, after they had received their teachings, believed in the Glorious Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, and were justified by faith departed full of the Holy Spirit to all regions of the world to preach the Holy Gospel that the Kingdom would soon come. From province to province and city*

to city they preached and with the Holy Spirit they chose other men from among the new believers to be bishops, priests, and deacons for the church. The apostles knew the position of the bishop and priesthood might cause envy, which could develop into plots and conspiracies. The apostles taught that when a church leader died, another would be chosen who should be justified to follow them in the bishop's position. So a church is not faithful if it dismisses anyone ordained for the priesthood or the position of bishop by the apostles or by the approval of the entire church.

The Position of Bishop in St. Clement's Letter:

St. Clement was the first to use the title "bishop" as the one who oversees. He also called bishop's priests. There was no distinction for the Roman Church as compared to the other churches, the letter was only a trial by St. Clement to overcome the envy and conspiracies in the Corinthian Church and did not express any more dignity for the Roman Church versus the Corinthian Church. The concept of church meant the church as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ not limited by its locality and so St. Ignatius, bishop of Antioch wrote many letters to different churches. All of those fathers understood the oneness of the church as the true and precise understanding. They also understood it is not right for any bishop to interfere in another church's affairs in the scope of another bishop. With this in mind, one can understand why the Pope of Alexandria refused to accept Origen whom was ordained as a priest by another bishop outside his See. Therefore ensuring the dignity of the bishop's See was a respectable dogma in the primitive Church.

Conclusion of the Letter:

St. Clement concluded his Epistle by Liturgical Prayer, which stated the Divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ who is "the only beloved Son of God through whom God taught us, sanctified us and brought us to the Glory." The Lord Jesus Christ is the Supreme Pontiff and the Guard of our souls." Then, St. Clement sang hymns that expressed the mercy and care of God. Finally St. Clement concludes his letter with a prayer for the governor of the regime, which clearly declares the relationship between the church and state. "O You our Master, Give them the Kingdom's authority by your supreme and ineffable power. So as we confess with dignity and glory which came upon them in obedience to Your will. Give them O Lord the health, the peace, the strength and the ability to practice their high leadership that you gave them. O You, our Master, the King of Kings and the Heavenly King of ages gave the man the power, the authority and the glory to rule over everything on the earth. O Lord, lead their thoughts with every good deed that is justified before You to practice in gentleness the power and authority you gave them in peace and humbleness so they can confess Your power and Your goodness.

Martyrdom of St. Clement:

According to apocryphal *acta* dating to the 4th century at earliest, St. Clement was banished from Rome to the Chersonesus during the reign of the Emperor Trajan and was set to work in a stone quarry. Finding on his arrival that the prisoners were suffering from lack of water, he

knelt down in prayer. Looking up, he saw a lamb on a hill, went to where the lamb had stood and struck the ground with his pickaxe, releasing a gushing stream of clear water. This miracle resulted in the conversion of large numbers of the local pagans and his fellow prisoners to Christianity. As punishment, Saint Clement was martyred by being tied to an anchor and thrown from a boat into the Black Sea.



St. Clement of Rome is commemorated in the Synaxarium of the Coptic Orthodox Church of Alexandria on the 29th of the month of Hatour [25 November (Julian) – equivalent to 8 December (Gregorian) due to the current 13-day Julian–Gregorian Calendar offset]. According to the Coptic Church Synaxarium, he suffered martyrdom in AD 100 during the reign of Emperor Trajan (98–117). He was martyred by tying his neck to an anchor and casting him into the sea. The record of the 29th of the Coptic month of Hatour states that this saint was born in Rome to an honorable father whose name was Fostinus and also states that he was a member of the Roman senate and that his father educated him and taught him Greek literature.

The Inkerman Cave Monastery marks the supposed place of Clement's burial in the Crimea. A year or two before his own death in 869, Saint Cyril brought to Rome what he believed to be the relics of Saint Clement, bones he found in the Crimea buried with an anchor on dry land. They are now enshrined in the Basilica di San Clemente. Other relics of Saint Clement, including his head, are claimed by the Kiev Monastery of the Caves in Ukraine.

Conclusion: St. Clement of Rome was an important figure in the early church. He wrote a crucial letter to the Corinthian church which made major contributions to church dogma and hierarchy. St. Clement mentioned several things in the letter. First, he emphasized the importance of apostolic succession. St. Clement stated that the church is shepherded through her bishops and priests through apostolic succession and hierarchy, and it is of utmost importance for the church's witness and continuity. Second, St. Clement was the first to use the title "bishop" as the one who oversees. Third, he noted that

the concept of church meant the church as the body of the Lord Jesus Christ not limited by its locality. He emphasized the oneness of the church as the true and precise understanding. Fourth, he also emphasized that it is not right for any bishop to interfere in another church's affairs in the scope of another bishop. With this in mind, one can understand why the Pope of Alexandria refused to accept Origen whom was ordained as a priest by another bishop outside his See. Therefore ensuring the dignity of the bishop's See was a crucial dogma in the early Church.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: "And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-13).

5. ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES:

- 1) The Apostolic Fathers, edited by Jack Sparks.
- 2) The Ante-Nicene Fathers,
- 3) Coptic Southern Diocese website

VERSE: “if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth” (1 Timothy 3:15).

LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to learn about the life and works of St. Ignatius of Antioch, and his martyrdom. He is one of the Apostolic fathers who was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist.

INTRODUCTION: St. Ignatius was born in Syria and martyred at Rome between 98 and 117 AD. More than one of the earliest ecclesiastical writers has given credence to the legend that Ignatius was the child whom the Savior took up in His arms, as described in Mark 9:35. It is also believed, that, with his friend St. Polycarp, he was among the auditors of the Apostle St. John. St. Ignatius was the third Bishop of Antioch and the immediate successor of Evodius and appointed to the See of Antioch by the Apostles. St. Ignatius’s work include theological works in the sacraments, including the Eucharist and the holiness of Holy Matrimony. He also wrote about the virtue of virginity and was the first person to use “Catholic Church” indicating one unified Church. He also wrote about the incarnation of Christ. He was martyred in Rome. He was attacked by wild beasts in a public display and was martyred under the reign of Emperor Trajan in 117 AD.



LESSON BODY: St. Ignatius converted to Christianity at a young age. Later in his life he was chosen to serve as a Bishop of Antioch, succeeding Saint Peter and St. Evodius (who died around AD 67). The 4th-century Church historian Eusebius records that St. Ignatius succeeded Evodius. St. Ignatius called himself *Theophorus* (God Bearer).

St. John Chrysostom lays special emphasis on the honor conferred upon the martyr in receiving his episcopal consecration at the hands of the Apostles themselves. All the sterling qualities of ideal pastor and a true soldier of the Lord Jesus Christ were possessed by the Bishop of Antioch in a preeminent degree. Accordingly, when the storm of the persecution of Domitian broke in its full fury upon the Christians of Syria, it found their faithful leader prepared and watchful. He was unremitting in his vigilance and tireless in his efforts to inspire hope and to strengthen the weaklings of his flock against the terrors of the persecution. The restoration of peace, though it was short-lived, greatly comforted him.

His Journey to Rome and Martyrdom:

But it was not for himself that he rejoiced, as the one great and ever-present wish of his chivalrous soul was that he might receive the fullness of Christian discipleship through the medium of martyrdom. His desire was not to remain long unsatisfied. Associated with the writings of St. Ignatius is a work called "Martyrium Ignatii", which purports to be an account by eyewitnesses of the martyrdom of St. Ignatius and the acts leading up to it. In this work, the full history of that eventful journey from Syria to Rome is faithfully recorded for the edification of the Church of Antioch. It is certainly very ancient and is reputed to have been written by Philo, deacon of Tarsus, and Rheus Agathopus, a Syrian, who accompanied St. Ignatius to Rome. According to these Acts, in the ninth year of his reign, Trajan, flushed with victory over the Scythians and Dacians, sought to perfect the universality of his dominion by a species of religious conquest. He decreed, therefore, that the Christians should unite with their pagan neighbors in the worship of the gods. A general persecution was threatened, and death was named as the penalty for all who refused to offer the prescribed sacrifice. Instantly alert to the

danger that threatened, St. Ignatius availed himself of all the means within his reach to thwart the purpose of the emperor. The success of his zealous efforts did not long remain hidden from the Church's persecutors. He was soon arrested and led before Trajan, who was then sojourning in Antioch. Accused by the emperor himself of violating the imperial edict, and of inciting others to like transgressions, St. Ignatius valiantly bore witness to the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ. His bearing before Trajan was characterized by inspired eloquence, sublime courage, and even a spirit of exultation. Incapable of appreciating the motives that animated him, the emperor ordered him to be put in chains and taken to Rome, there to become the food of wild beasts and a spectacle for the people.

That the trials of this journey to Rome were great as gathered from his letter to the Romans (par. 5): "From Syria even to Rome I fight with wild beasts, by land and sea, by night and by day, being bound amidst ten leopards, even a company of soldiers, who only grow worse when they are kindly treated." Despite all this, his journey was a kind of triumph. News of his fate, his destination, and his probable itinerary had gone swiftly before. At several places along the road his fellow Christians greeted him with words of comfort and reverential homage. It is probable that he embarked on his way to Rome at Seleucia, in Syria, the nearest port to Antioch, for either Tarsus in Cilicia, or Attalia in Pamphylia, and thence, gathered from his letters, he journeyed overland through Asia Minor. At Laodicea, on the River Lycus, where a choice of routes presented itself, his guards selected the more northerly, which brought the prospective martyr through Philadelphia and Sardis, and finally to Smyrna, where St. Polycarp, his fellow-disciple in the school of St. John, was bishop. The stay at Smyrna, which was a protracted one, gave the representatives of the various Christian communities in Asia Minor an opportunity of greeting the illustrious prisoner, and offering him the homage of the Churches they represented. From the congregations of Ephesus, Magnesia, and Tralles, deputations came to comfort him. To each of these Christian communities he addressed letters from Smyrna, exhorting them to obedience to their respective bishops, and warning them to avoid the contamination of heresy. These, letters are redolent with the spirit of Christian charity, apostolic zeal, and pastoral solicitude. While still there he wrote also to the Christians of Rome, begging them to do nothing to deprive him of the opportunity of martyrdom.

From Smyrna his captors took him to Troas, from which place he dispatched letters to the Christian of Philadelphia and Smyrna, and to St. Polycarp. Besides these letters, St. Ignatius had intended to address others to the Christian communities of Asia Minor, inviting them to give public expression to their sympathy with the brethren in Antioch, but the altered plans of his guards, necessitating a hurried departure, from Troas, defeated his purpose, and he was obliged to content himself with delegating this office to his friend St. Polycarp. At Troas they took ship for Neapolis. From this place their journey led them overland through Macedonia and Illyria. The next port of embarkation was probably Dyrrhachium (Durazzo). Whether having arrived at the shores of the Adriatic, he completed his journey by land or sea, it is impossible to determine. Not long after his arrival in Rome he won his long-coveted crown of martyrdom in the Flavian amphitheater. The Relics of the holy martyr were borne back to Antioch by the deacon Philo of Cilicia, and Rheus Agathopus, a Syrian, and were interred outside the gates not far from the beautiful suburb of Daphne. They were afterwards removed by the Emperor

Theodosius II to the Tychaem, or Temple of Fortune which was then converted into a Christian church under the patronage of the martyr whose relics it sheltered. In 637 they were translated to St. Clement's Cathedral at Rome, where they now rest. The character of St. Ignatius, as deduced from his own and the extant writings of his contemporaries, is that of a true athlete of the Lord Jesus Christ. The triple honor of apostle, bishop, and martyr was well merited by this energetic soldier of the Faith. An enthusiastic devotion to duty, a passionate love of sacrifice, and an utter fearlessness in the defense of Christian truth, were his chief characteristics. Zeal for the spiritual well-being of those under his charge breathes from every line of his writings. Ever vigilant lest they be infected by the rampant heresies of those early days; praying for them, that their faith and courage may not be wanting in the hour of persecution; constantly exhorting them to unflinching obedience to their bishops; teaching them all Christian truth; eagerly sighing for the crown of martyrdom, that his own blood may fructify in added graces in the souls of his flock, he proves himself in every sense a true, pastor of souls, the good shepherd that lays down his life for his sheep.



St. Ignatius' Letters:

The oldest collection of the writings of St. Ignatius known to have existed was that made use of by the historian Eusebius in the first half of the fourth century, but which unfortunately is no longer extant. It was made up of the seven letters written by St. Ignatius whilst on his way to Rome; these letters were addressed to the Christians of Ephesus (*Pros Ephesious*); Magnesia (*Magnesieusin*); Tralles (*Trallianois*); Rome (*Pros Romaious*); Philadelphia (*Philadelphousin*); Smyrna (*Smyrnaiois*); and to Polycarp (*Pros Polykarpon*). It is scarcely possible to exaggerate the importance of the testimony which the Ignatian letters offer to the dogmatic character of Apostolic Christianity. The martyred Bishop of Antioch constitutes a most important link between the Apostles and the Fathers of the early Church. Receiving from the Apostles themselves, whose auditor he was, not only the substance of revelation, but also their own

inspired interpretation of it; dwelling, as it were, at the very fountain-head of Gospel truth, his testimony must necessarily carry with it the greatest weight and demand the most serious consideration. Among the many Christian doctrines to be found in the letters are the following: the Church was Divinely established as a visible society, the salvation of souls is its end, and those who separate themselves from it cut themselves off from God (Philad. c. iii); the hierarchy of the Church was instituted by the Lord Jesus Christ (Introd. to Philad.; Ephes., c. vi); the threefold character of the hierarchy (Magn., c. vi); the order of the episcopacy superior by Divine authority to that of the priesthood (Magn., c. vi, c. xiii; Smyrn., c. viii; Trall., .c. iii); the unity of the Church (Trall., c. vi; Philad., c. iii; Magn., c. xiii); the holiness of the Church (Smyrn., Ephes., Magn., Trall., and Rom.); the catholicity of the Church (Smyrn., c. viii); the infallibility of the Church (Philad., c. iii; Ephes., cc. xvi, xvii); the doctrine of the Eucharist (Smyrn., c. viii), which word we find for the first time applied to the Blessed Sacrament, just as in Smyrn., viii, we meet for the first time the phrase "Catholic Church", used to designate all Christians; the Incarnation (Ephes., c. xviii); the supernatural virtue of virginity, already much esteemed and made the subject of a vow (Polyc., c. v); the religious character of matrimony (Polyc., c. v); the value of united prayer (Ephes., c. xiii).

Lastly, St. Ignatius the Theophorus is the intercessor of the Syrian Church, a sister of our Coptic Orthodox Church in the faith "Non-Chalcedonian Orthodox Churches" and so the Syrian Patriarch, who is usually mentioned in the Fathers Litany in our Divine Liturgy, carries St. Ignatius' name as a part of his title "Mar Ignatius" and now he is "Mar Ignatius Zaka Iuaous the First.

The Martyrdom of St. Ignatius is commemorated on the 24th of Kiahk in the Coptic Synaxarium. Here is the text of the Synaxarium:

"On this day, the honorable St. Ignatius, Patriarch of Antioch, was martyred. He was a disciple of St. John the Evangelist and travelled with him to many cities. St. John ordained him Patriarch of Antioch where he preached the life giving Gospel, converted many to the knowledge of God, baptized them, illumined them, and showed them the error of worshipping idols. The pagans were enraged, they seized him and tortured him with various tortures. They put burning coals in his hands and pressed his hands for about two hours. Then they burnt his side with red hot pitch and burning oil. They combed his body with iron combs. When they became tired of torturing him, they cast him in prison where he stayed for a long time. When they remembered him, they brought him out and promised him great rewards and then threatened him. As he was steadfast in his faith, they threw him to the wild beasts and they devoured him and rendered him into pieces. He delivered up his pure spirit in the hand of the Lord Whom he loved."

Details of St. Ignatius's Letter to the Romans:

Here we give the exact text of St. Ignatius's letter to the Romans:

Ignatius, who is also called Theophorus, to the Church which has obtained mercy, through the majesty of the Most High Father, and Jesus Christ, His only-begotten Son; the Church which is beloved and enlightened by the will of Him that wills all things which are according to the love of Jesus Christ our God, which also presides in the place of the region of the Romans, worthy of God, worthy of honor, worthy of the highest happiness, worthy of praise, worthy of obtaining her every desire, worthy of being deemed holy, and which presides over love, is named from Christ, and from the Father, which I also salute in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father: to those who are united, both according to the flesh and spirit, to every one of His commandments; who are filled inseparably with the grace of God, and are purified from every strange taint, [I wish] abundance of happiness unblameably, in Jesus Christ our God.

CHAPTER 1: AS A PRISONER, I HOPE TO SEE YOU

Through prayer to God I have obtained the privilege of seeing your most worthy faces, and have even been granted more than I requested; for I hope as a prisoner in Christ Jesus to salute you, if indeed it be the will of God that I be thought worthy of attaining unto the end. For the beginning has been well ordered, if I may obtain grace to cling to my lot without hindrance unto the end. For I am afraid of your love, lest it should do me an injury. For it is easy for you to accomplish what you please; but it is difficult for me to attain to God, if ye spare me.

CHAPTER 2: DO NOT SAVE ME FROM MARTYRDOM

For it is not my desire to act towards you as a man-pleaser, but as pleasing God, even as also ye please Him. For neither shall I ever have such [another] opportunity of attaining to God; nor will ye, if ye shall now be silent, ever be entitled to the honor of a better work. For if ye are silent concerning me, I shall become God's; but if you show your love to my flesh, I shall again have to run my race. Pray, then, do not seek to confer any greater favor upon me than that I be sacrificed to God while the altar is still prepared; that, being gathered together in love, ye may sing praise to the Father, through Christ Jesus, that God has deemed me, the bishop of Syria, worthy to be sent for from the east unto the west. It is good to set from the world unto God, that I may rise again to Him.

CHAPTER 3: PRAY RATHER THAT I MAY ATTAIN TO MARTYRDOM

You have never envied any one; ye have taught others. Now I desire that those things may be confirmed [by your conduct], which in your instructions ye enjoin [on others]. Only request in my behalf both inward and outward strength, that I may not only speak, but [truly] will; and that I may not merely be called a Christian, but really be found to be one. For if I be truly found [a Christian], I may also be called one, and be then deemed faithful, when I shall no longer appear to the world. Nothing visible is eternal. "For the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal." For our God, Jesus Christ, Now that He is with the Father, is all the more revealed [in His glory]. Christianity is not a thing of silence only, but also of [manifest] greatness.

CHAPTER 4: ALLOW ME TO FALL A PREY TO THE WILD BEASTS

I write to the Churches, and impress on them all, that I shall willingly die for God, unless ye hinder me. I beseech of you not to show an unseasonable good-will towards me. Suffer me to become food for the wild beasts, through whose instrumentality it will be granted me to attain to God. I am the wheat of God, and let me be ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that I may be found the pure bread of Christ. Rather entice the wild beasts, that they may become my tomb, and may leave nothing of my body; so that when I have fallen asleep [in death], I may be no trouble to anyone. Then shall I truly be a disciple of Christ, when the world shall not see so much as my body. Entreat Christ for me, that by these instruments I may be found a sacrifice [to God]. I do not, as Peter and Paul, issue commandments unto you. They were apostles; I am but a condemned man: they were free, while I am, even until now, a servant. But when I suffer, I shall be the freedman of Jesus, and shall rise again emancipated in Him. And now, being a prisoner, I learn not to desire anything worldly or vain.

CHAPTER 5: I DESIRE TO DIE

From Syria even unto Rome I fight with beasts, both by land and sea, both by night and day, being bound to ten leopards, I mean a band of soldiers, who, even when they receive benefits, show themselves all the worse. But I am the more instructed by their injuries [to act as a disciple of Christ]; “yet am I not thereby justified.” May I enjoy the wild beasts that are prepared for me; and I pray they may be found eager to rush upon me, which also I will entice to devour me speedily, and not deal with me as with some, whom, out of fear, they have not touched. But if they be unwilling to assail me, I will compel them to do so. Pardon me [in this]: I know what is for my benefit. Now I begin to be a disciple. And let no one, of things visible or invisible, envy me that I should attain to Jesus Christ. Let fire and the cross; let the crowds of wild beasts; let tearings, breakings, and dislocations of bones; let cutting off of members; let shatterings of the whole body; and let all the dreadful torments of the devil come upon me: only let me attain to Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER 6: BY DEATH I SHALL ATTAIN TRUE LIFE

All the pleasures of the world, and all the kingdoms of this earth, shall profit me nothing. It is better for me to die in behalf of Jesus Christ, than to reign over all the ends of the earth. “For what shall a man be profited, if he gain the whole world, but lose his own soul?” Him I seek, who died for us: Him I desire, who rose again for our sake. This is the gain which is laid up for me. Pardon me, brethren: do not hinder me from living, do not wish to keep me in a state of death; and while I desire to belong to God, do not ye give me over to the world. Suffer me to obtain pure light: when I have gone thither, I shall indeed be a man of God. Permit me to be an imitator of the passion of my God. If anyone has Him within himself, let him consider what I desire, and let him have sympathy with me, as knowing how I am straitened.

CHAPTER 7: REASON OF DESIRING TO DIE

The prince of this world would fain carry me away, and corrupt my disposition towards God. Let none of you, therefore, who are [in Rome] help him; rather be ye on my side, that is, on the

side of God. Do not speak of Jesus Christ, and yet set your desires on the world. Let not envy find a dwelling-place among you; nor even should I, when present with you, exhort you to it, be ye persuaded to listen to me, but rather give credit to those things which I now write to you. For though I am alive while I write to you, yet I am eager to die. My love has been crucified, and there is no fire in me desiring to be fed; but there is within me a water that lives and speaks, saying to me inwardly, Come to the Father. I have no delight in corruptible food, nor in the pleasures of this life. I desire the bread of God, the heavenly bread, the bread of life, which is the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became afterwards of the seed of David and Abraham; and I desire the drink of God, namely His blood, which is incorruptible love and eternal life.

CHAPTER 8: BE YE FAVORABLE TO ME

I no longer wish to live after the manner of men, and my desire shall be fulfilled if ye consent. Be ye willing, then, that ye also may have your desires fulfilled. I entreat you in this brief letter; do ye give credit to me. Jesus Christ will reveal these things to you, [so that ye shall know] that I speak truly. He is the mouth altogether free from falsehood, by which the Father has truly spoken. Pray ye for me, that I may attain [the object of my desire]. I have not written to you according to the flesh, but according to the will of God. If I shall suffer, ye have wished [well] to me; but if I am rejected, ye have hated me.

CHAPTER 9: PRAY FOR THE CHURCH IN SYRIA

Remember in your prayers the Church in Syria, which now has God for its shepherd, instead of me. Jesus Christ alone will oversee it, and your love [will also regard it]. But as for me, I am ashamed to be counted one of them; for indeed I am not worthy, as being the very last of them, and one born out of due time. But I have obtained mercy to be somebody, if I shall attain to God. My spirit salutes you, and the love of the Churches that have received me in the name of Jesus Christ, and not as a mere passer-by. For even those Churches which were not near to me in the way, I mean according to the flesh, have gone before me, city by city, [to meet me.]

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSION

Now I write these things to you from Smyrna by the Ephesians, who are deservedly most happy. There is also with me, along with many others, Crocus, one dearly beloved by me. As to those who have gone before me from Syria to Rome for the glory of God, I believe that you are acquainted with them; to whom, [then,] do ye make known that I am at hand. For they are all worthy, both of God and of you; and it is becoming that you should refresh them in all things. I have written these things unto you, on the day before the ninth of the Calends of September (that is, on the twenty-third day of August). Fare ye well to the end, in the patience of Jesus Christ. Amen.

CONCLUSION: St. Ignatius of Antioch was a pillar in the early church. His theological teachings and writings had a great impact on the church. He wrote about the Eucharist, the Incarnation, Matrimony, the virtue of virginity, and the importance of a unified Catholic and Apostolic

church. He wrote a lengthy letter to the Romans discussing these topics. St. Ignatius loved Christ so much that he greatly sought martyrdom and was martyred in 117 AD.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: “Then Jesus said to His disciples, ‘If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it’” (Matthew 16:24-25).

6. ST. POLYCARP, BISHOP OF SMYRNA

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES: There are many references on this topic. Some well known references include

- i) 2000 Years of Coptic Christianity by Otto Meinardus
- ii) The Apostolic Fathers, Edited by Jack Sparks.
- iii) The Early Church, by Henry Chadwick
- iv) Writings of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and post-Nicene Fathers.

VERSE: “you say also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed ” (1 Peter 4:13).

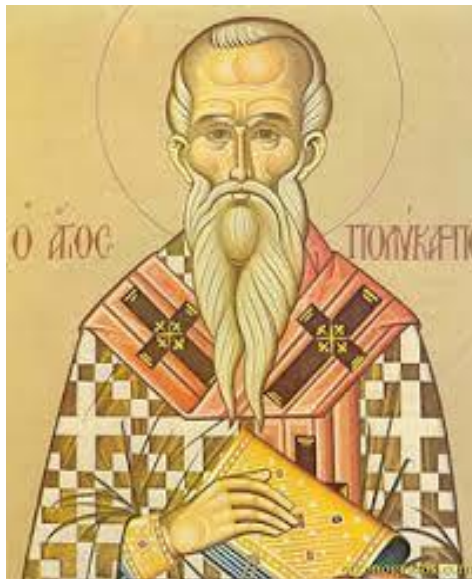
LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to learn about the life of St. Polycarp, his letters, and the details of his martyrdom.

INTRODUCTION:

St. Polycarp was born in 70 A D to a Christian family who received its faith from the very apostles of Lord Jesus Christ. In Greek, his name means “much fruit.” During these apostolic times, the young Church lived and was strengthened by visits of the apostles and their disciples. They had already warned of difficult times in their epistles, calling the Christians too that *“you say also rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed ” (1 Peter 4:13).*

St. Polycarp was chosen by the bishop as his personal secretary; and later, when he was forty years old became the bishop of Smyrna. There, he remained for 86 years of his life, faithfully serving the Church. St. Polycarp was one of the most illustrious of the apostolic fathers, who, being among the immediate disciples of the apostles, received instructions from their mouths, and inherited of them the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ in a degree so much the more eminent as they lived nearer the fountain head. St. St. Polycarp embraced Christianity very young, about the year 80 AD was a disciple of the apostles, in particular of St. John the Evangelist, and was constituted by him Bishop of Smyrna, probably before his banishment to Patmos in 96 AD.



Interesting facts about St. Polycarp:

- Was born in 69AD and martyred on Feb 23rd, 155 AD by the Romans.
- He became a Christian at a young age through St. John the beloved.
- Learned the faith directly from the apostles but mainly was the disciple of St. John the beloved
- Wrote many letters to strengthen the faith of the believers but the only one that was left behind was the letter to the Philippians and we see many things written in this letter that are taken from St. Paul's epistles.
- Was a Greek bishop of Smyrna at a young age (Smyrna is in Turkey)
- He was the only one in history to get a personal letter from St Ignatius and When St. Ignatius was travelling to his martyrdom he stopped
- At Smyrna to ask St. Ignatius to take care of Christian people that he was leaving behind.
- After the death of St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp gathered all the letters received from St. Ignatius and passed them on to other Christians.
- Was known to be very strict against heresies and heretics. One Day he was walking down the street and the famous heretic Marcion was walking by. Marcion looked at St. Polycarp and said sarcastically "Do you recognize me" and St. Polycarp answered and said " I recognize you as the first born of Satan"
- Near the end of his life he visited the bishop of Rome, bishop Anicetus, to discuss a number of issues including which date to celebrate the Easter on. The Eastern churches (including St. Polycarp's church) was celebrating the Easter on the same day as the Jewish Passover but the Roman church was using a specified Sunday each year. They decided to stay the same as they are since they did not agree on one date but their relationship remained good and strong.
- Interestingly in the Book of Revelation, you see a message sent to each Bishop of the seven churches and the message sent to the bishop of Smyrna was for St. Polycarp and it is the only message that found no fault in the bishop of that church.

LESSON BODY:

St. Polycarp seems to have been the angel or Bishop of Smyrna who was commended above all the bishops of Asia by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself in the Apocalypse, and the only one without a reproach. Our Savior encouraged him under his poverty, tribulation, and persecutions, especially the calumnies of the Jews, called him rich in grace, and promised him the crown of life by martyrdom (Revelation 2:8-10). This view was very common among the scholars St Jerome, Irenaeus, Papias, and Origen within their commentaries on the Holy Book of Revelation in the Early Church.

This saint was respected by the faithful to a degree of veneration. He formed many holy disciples, among whom were St. Irenaeus and Papias. When Florinus, who had often visited St.

Polycarp, had broached certain heresies, St. Irenaeus wrote to him as follows: "These things were not taught you by the bishops who preceded us. I could tell you the place where the blessed Polycarp sat to preach the Word of God. It is yet present to my mind with what gravity he everywhere came in and went out; what was the sanctity of his deportment, the majesty of his countenance and of his whole exterior, and what his holy exhortations to the people were. I seem to hear him now relate how he conversed with John and many others who had seen Jesus Christ; the words he had heard from their mouths. I can protest before God that if this holy bishop had heard of any error like yours, he would have immediately stopped his ears, and cried out, according to his custom, Good God! That I should be reserved to these times to hear such things! That very instant he would have fled out of the place in which he had heard such doctrine." St. Jerome mentions that St. Polycarp met at Rome the heretic Marcion in the streets, who resenting that the holy bishop did not take that notice of him which he expected, said to him, "Do you not know me, Polycarp?" "Yes," answered the saint, "I know you to be the firstborn of Satan." He had learned this abhorrence of the authors of heresy, who knowingly and willingly adulterate the divine truths, from his master, St. John, who fled out of the bath in which he saw Cerinthus. St. Polycarp kissed with respect the chains of the elderly St. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch, who passed by Smyrna on the road to his martyrdom, and who recommended to our saint the care and comfort of his distant Church of Antioch, which he repeated to him in a letter from Troas, desiring him to write in his name to those Churches of Asia to which he had not leisure to write himself. St. Polycarp was the only individual to whom the great Antiochian martyr ever addressed a surviving personal letter. In the following years, St. Polycarp gathered the letters of St. Ignatius and sent them to others.

St. Polycarp wrote a letter to the Philippians shortly after, which is highly commended by St. Irenaeus, St. Jerome, St Eusebius, Photius, and others, and is still extant. It is justly admired both for the excellent instructions it contains and for the simplicity and perspicuity of the style, and was publicly read in the church in Asia in St. Jerome's time. In it he calls a heretic, as above, the eldest son of Satan. About the year 158 he undertook a journey of charity to Rome, to confer with Pope Anicetus about certain points of discipline, especially about the time of celebrating the Glorious Resurrection, for the Asiatic churches kept it on the fourteenth day of the vernal equinoctial moon, as the Jews did, on whatever day of the week it fell; whereas Rome, Egypt, and all the West observed it on the Sunday following. It was agreed that both might follow their custom without breaking the bands of charity. St. Anicetus, to testify his respect, yielded to him the honor of celebrating the Eucharist in his own Church.

St. Polycarp's Martyrdom:

St. Polycarp's martyrdom was mentioned in a letter which was soon afterward written by the Christians at Smyrna to the Christians at Philomenus. This letter has come to be called the *Acts of the Martyrdom of Saint Polycarp*.

In the sixth year of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, Statius Quadratus being proconsul of Asia, a violent persecution broke out in that country, in which the faithful gave heroic proofs of

their courage and love of God, to the astonishment of the infidels. When they were torn to pieces with scourges till their very bowels were laid bare, amidst the moans and tears of the spectators, who were moved with pity at the sight of their torments, not one of them gave so much as a single groan, so little regard had they for their own flesh in the cause of God. No kinds of torture, no inventions of cruelty, were forborne to force them to conformity to the pagan worship of the times. The year St. Polycarp was martyred, there was a civil celebration in Smyrna, and games were being held at the local amphitheater. A well-known Christian boy named Aereanicus had been martyred, preferring to fight the beasts rather than to follow pagan practices, the alternative given to him. When he had been slain by the animals, the Christians were accused of having brain washed him into doing such a foolish thing as prefer death to a "simple sacrifice". The mob began shouting; "Bring us Polycarp!" When St. Polycarp heard of these events, he was not disturbed, and desired to remain in the city. But the faithful were able to convince him to withdraw to a farm nearby with a few friends. St. Polycarp prayed night and day, for all men and for the Churches throughout the world. One night while he was praying, St. Polycarp had a vision, seeing his pillow blazing with flames. He came to his friends and said, "I must be burned alive." Herod, the Irenarch, or keeper of the peace, whose office it was to prevent misdemeanors and apprehend malefactors, sent horsemen by night to arrest St. Polycarp. Now, the soldiers who were searching for him arrived at St. Polycarp's own house, and when they could not find him, they seized two young servant boys. One broke down under their torture and betrayed where the bishop had gone.

And late in the evening of that Friday, they rode to the farm. They took the servant boy with them and found St. Polycarp in bed in the upper room of the small cottage. When he heard of their arrival he went downstairs and talked with them. St. Polycarp knew why they had come and greeted them. The soldiers became upset that there had been such an uproar and eagerness to arrest such an old man. St. Polycarp ordered a meal for the band of captors, and asked them to give him an hour or so in order that he might pray. This was granted. The soldiers were astonished to see the bishop pray intently for two hours, remembering the names and the needs of so many of his and the whole church with so much earnestness and devotion that several of those that were come to seize him repented they had undertaken the commission. They set him on an ass, and were conducting him towards the city when he was met on the road by Herod and his father Nicetes, who took him into their chariot, and endeavored to persuade him to a little compliance, saying, "What harm is there in saying Lord Caesar, or even in sacrificing, to escape death?" By the word Lord was meant nothing less than a kind of deity or godhead. The bishop at first was silent, in imitation of our Savoir, but being pressed, he gave them this resolute answer, "I shall never do what you desire of me." At these words, taking off the mask of friendship and compassion, they treated him with scorn and reproaches, and thrust him out of the chariot with such violence that his leg was bruised by the fall.

The holy man went forward cheerfully to the place where the people were assembled. Upon his entering it a voice from Heaven was heard by many, "Polycarp, be courageous, and act manfully." He was led directly to the tribunal of the proconsul, who exhorted him to respect his own age, to swear by the genius of Caesar, and to say, "Take away the impious," meaning the

Christians. The saint, turning towards the people in the pit, said, with a stern countenance, "Exterminate the wicked," meaning by this expression either a wish that they might cease to be wicked by their conversion to the faith of the Lord Jesus Christ, or this was a prediction of the calamity which befell their city in 177, when Smyrna was overturned by an earthquake, as we read in Dion and Aristides. The proconsul repeated, "Swear by the genius of Caesar, and I discharge you; blaspheme Christ." St. Polycarp replied, "I have served him these 86 years, and he never did me any harm, but much good, and how can I blaspheme my King and my Savior? If you require of me to swear by the genius of Caesar, as you call it, hear my free confession- I am a Christian; but if you desire to learn the Christian religion, appoint a time, and hear me." The proconsul said, "Persuade the people." The martyr replied, "I addressed my discourse to you, for we are taught to give due honor to princes as far as is consistent with religion. But the populace is an incompetent judge to justify myself before." Indeed rage rendered them incapable of hearing him. The proconsul then assuming a tone of severity, said: "I have wild beasts." "Call for them," replied the saint: "for we are unalterably resolved not to change from good to evil. It is only good to pass from evil to good." The proconsul said: "If you contemn the beasts, I will cause you to be burnt to ashes." Polycarp answered: "You threaten me with a fire which burns for a short time and then goes out, but are yourself ignorant of the judgment to come, and of the fire of everlasting torments which is prepared for the wicked. Why do you delay? Bring against me what you please." Whilst he said this and many other things, he appeared in a transport of joy and confidence, and his countenance shone with a certain heavenly grace and pleasant cheerfulness, insomuch that the proconsul himself was struck with admiration.

However, he ordered a crier to make public proclamation three times in the middle of the Stadium (as was the Roman custom in capital cases): "Polycarp hath confessed himself a Christian." At this proclamation the whole multitude of Jews and Gentiles gave a great shout, the latter crying out, "This is the great teacher of Asia; the father of the Christians; the destroyer of our gods, who preaches to men not to sacrifice to or adore them." They applied to Philip the Asiarch to let loose a lion upon St. Polycarp. He told them that it was not in his power, because those shows had been closed. Then they unanimously demanded that he should be burnt alive.

Their request was no sooner granted but every one ran with all speed to fetch wood from the baths and shops. The pile being prepared, St. Polycarp put off his garments, untied his girdle, and began to take off his shoes, an office he had not been accustomed to, the Christians having always striven who should do these things for him, regarding it as a happiness to be admitted to touch him. The wood and other combustibles were heaped all round him. The executioners would have nailed him to the stake; but he said to them: "Suffer me to be as I am. He who gives me grace to undergo this fire will enable me to stand still without that precaution."

They therefore contented themselves with tying his hands behind his back, and in this posture looking up towards Heaven, he prayed as follows: "O Almighty Lord God, Father of thy beloved and blessed Son Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of thee, God of angels, powers, and every creature, and of all the race of the just that live in thy presence! I bless thee

for having been pleased in thy goodness to bring me to this hour, that I may receive a portion in the number of thy martyrs, and partake of the chalice of thy Christ, for the resurrection to eternal life, in the incorruptibleness of the Holy Spirit. Amongst whom grant me to be received this day as a pleasing sacrifice, such a one as thou thyself hast prepared, that so thou majesty accomplish what thou, O true and faithful God! Hast foreshown. Wherefore, for all things I praise, bless, and glorify thee, through the eternal high priest Jesus Christ, thy beloved Son, with whom, to Thee and the Holy Spirit be glory now and forever. Amen." He had scarce said Amen when fire was set to the pile, which increased to a mighty flame. But behold a wonder, say the authors of these acts, seen by us reserved to attest it to others; the flames forming themselves into an arch, like the sails of a ship swelled with the wind, gently encircled the body of the martyr, which stood in the middle, resembling not roasted flesh, but purified gold or silver, appearing bright through the flames; and his body sending forth such a fragrance that we seemed to smell precious spices. The blind infidels were only exasperated to see his body could not be consumed, and ordered a spearman to pierce him through, which he did, and such a quantity of blood issued out of his left side as to quench the fire.

The malice of the devil ended not here: he endeavored to obstruct the relics of the martyr being carried off by the Christians; for many desired to do it, to show their respect to his body. Therefore, by the suggestion of Satan, Nicetes advised the proconsul not to bestow it on the Christians, lest, said he, abandoning the crucified man, they should adore St. Polycarp: the Jews suggested this, "Not knowing," say the authors of the Acts of Martyrs, "that we can never forsake Christ, nor adore any other, though we love the martyrs, as his disciples and imitators, for the great love they bore their king and master." The centurion, seeing a contest raised by the Jews, placed the body in the middle, and burnt it to ashes. "We afterwards took up the bones," say they, "more precious than the richest jewels or gold, and deposited them decently in a place at which may God grant us to assemble with joy, to celebrate the birthday of the martyr." It was at two o'clock in the afternoon, which the authors of the Acts of Martyrs call the Eighth Hour, in the year 166, that St. Polycarp received his crown, according to Tillemont; but in 169, according to Basnage. His tomb is still shown with great veneration at Smyrna, in a small chapel. St. Irenaeus speaks of St. Polycarp as being of an uncommon age.



The Epistle of St. Polycarp to the Philippians:

The Epistle of St. Polycarp to the Philippians, is the only one among those which he wrote that has been preserved, is a standing proof of the apostolic spirit with which he was animated, and of that profound humility, perfect meekness, burning charity, and holy zeal, of which his life was so admirable an example. The beginning is an effusion of spiritual joy and charity with which he was transported at the happiness of their conversion to God, and their fervor in divine love. His extreme abhorrence of heresy makes him immediately fall upon that of the Docetae against which he arms the faithful, by clearly demonstrating that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly made man, died, and rose again: in which his terms admirably express his most humble and affectionate devotion to our Divine Redeemer, under these great mysteries of love.

Besides walking in truth, he takes notice, that to be raised with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory, we must also do His Will, keep all His commandments, and love whatever He loved; refraining from all fraud, avarice, detraction, and rash judgment; repaying evil with good, forgiving and showing mercy to others that we ourselves may find mercy. "These things," says he, "I write to you on justice, because you incited me; for neither I, nor any other like me, can attain to the wisdom of the blessed and glorious Paul, into whose epistles if you look, you may raise your spiritual fabric by strengthening faith, which is our mother, hope following, and charity towards God, Christ, and our neighbor preceding us. He who has charity is far from all sin." The saint gives short instructions to every particular state, then adds, "Everyone who hath not confessed that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is antichrist; and who hath not confessed the suffering of the cross, is of the devil; and who hath drawn the oracles of the Lord to his passions, and hath said that there is no resurrection nor judgment, he is the oldest son of Satan." He exhorts to watching always in prayer, lest we be led into temptation; to be constant in fasting, persevering, joyful in hope, and in the pledge of our justice, which is Christ Jesus, imitating his patience; for, by suffering for his name, we glorify him. To encourage them to suffer, he reminds them of those who had suffered before their eyes: Ignatius, Zozimus, and Rufus, and some of their own congregation, "who are now," says our saint, "in the place which is due to them with the Lord, with whom they also suffered."

The letter of St. Ignatius to St. Polycarp:

St. Ignatius (the bishop of Antioch) wrote to St. Polycarp. In his letter, we can see how St. Polycarp was so dear to him, he wrote to him "I glory exceedingly that I was judged worthy of seeing your blameless face...". Then in his letter, as an older priest, he gives advice to St. Polycarp in dealing with the people, defending the faith, taking care of the widows. After that he advises the people of Smyrna to be united and suffer for the gospel, obey the bishop and the priests. After the death of St. Ignatius, St. Polycarp shared the letter with others.

St. Polycarp's martyrdom is commemorated on 29th of Amshir (March 8th) in the Coptic Synaxarium.

The Synaxarium reads:

“On this day of the year 167 A.D., St. Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was martyred. His life began at the end of the first Christian century, and he became the disciple of St. John the Evangelist. He was the one about whom the Lord said, "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead, and came to life: I know your works, tribulations and poverty, but you are rich; and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'" (Revelation 2:8-10)

St. Polycarp went to Rome in the year 157 A.D. to settle a dispute with Arikestus, Bishop of Rome, in regard to the Easter feast. He shepherded his flock well and remained on his chair for a long time until a good old age. He wrote many articles and discourses about the Holy Advent, death, hell, torments of hell, the virgin St. Mary and many others. He attracted many souls to the Lord with his life-giving teaching.

When Emperor Marcus Aurelius incited persecutions against Christians, they strongly pressured him saying, "Swear and we will set you free; curse Christ and we will spare your life." Polycarp replied, "I have served my Lord Christ for 86 years and He never harmed me so how can I blaspheme against my King Who saved me?"

The Governor said, "If you do not fear the wild beasts, I will make the fire consume you if you do not repent." St. Polycarp said, "You threatened me with fire that burns for a while, then burns out, for you do not know the everlasting fire of judgement and the eternal punishment that are awaiting the evil ones. Now why are you lingering? Do whatever you want."

After severe tortures and many threats, the saint wished to shed his blood for Christ's name. He commanded and taught his people to be steadfast in faith and told them that they would not see his face after that day. They wept and tried to hold him down to prevent him from leaving but they failed to stop him.

He went and confessed the Lord Christ before the Governor who ordered to cut off his head after much torture; thus he received the crown of life. Some of the believers took his body, shrouded and buried it with great honor."

CONCLUSION: St. Polycarp was a disciple of St. John the Apostle. The life of St. Polycarp was another great example of a person who was totally immersed in Christ. We must remember his word when he said, that ""I have served him these 86 years, and he never did me any harm, but much good, and how can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?" What words to live by! We must always think about how good Christ is to us. Has He ever done us harm, in anything? Has Christ ever let us down in anything? St. Polycarp's words are important and deep. St. Polycarp knew and communicated with St. Ignatius. He was strict in his spiritual life and was tough on heretical teachings. He often quoted St. Paul's epistles in his letters. He was the one about whom the Lord said, "And to the angel of the church in Smyrna write, 'These things says the First and the Last, Who was dead, and came to life: I know your works, tribulations and poverty, but you are rich; and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan. Do not fear any of those things which you are about to suffer. Indeed, the devil is about to throw some of you into prison, that you may be tested, and you will have tribulation ten days. Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'" (Revelation 2:8-10). He was a very brave and courageous person in his martyrdom, fearing nothing and fearing no one.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: Be faithful until death, and I will give you the crown of life.'" (Revelation 2:10)

7. THE SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES: There are many references on this topic. Some well known references include

- i) 2000 Years of Coptic Christianity by Otto Meinardus
- ii) The Apostolic Fathers, Edited by Jack Sparks.
- iii) The Early Church, by Henry Chadwick
- iv) Writings of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and post-Nicene Fathers.

VERSE: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you, and fill up in my flesh what is lacking in the afflictions of Christ, for the sake of His body, which is the church" (Colossians 1:24).

LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to learn about the Shepherd of Hermas, his writings, and their impact on the early Church and Christianity as a whole.

INTRODUCTION:

Hermas is one of the first or second century's fathers (100 – 160 AD) and the author of the book called "The Shepherd", a work which had great authority in the early church and was ranked with Holy Scripture. St. Eusebius tells us that it was publicly read in the churches, and that while some denied it to be canonical, others "considered it most necessary". St. Athanasius speaks of it, together with the Didache, in connection with the Deuterocanonical Books of the Old Testament, as uncanonical, yet recommended by the ancients for the reading of catechumens. Elsewhere he calls it a most profitable book. Rufinus similarly says that the ancients wished it to be read, but not to be used as an authority as to the Faith. It is found with the Epistle of Barnabas at the end of the New Testament in the great Siniatic Bible *Aleph* (fourth century), and between the Acts of the Apostles and the Acts of Paul in the stichometrical list of the Codex Claromontanus. St. Irenaeus and Tertullian cite the "Shepherd" as Scripture. St. Clement of Alexandria constantly quotes it with reverence, and so did Origen, who held that the author was the Hermas mentioned by St. Paul in his epistle to the Romans, chapter 14. He said the work seems to him to be very useful, and divinely inspired.



LESSON BODY:

Contents of the Book:

The book consists of five visions, twelve mandates, or commandments, and ten similitudes, or parables. It commences abruptly in the first person: "He who brought me up sold me to a certain Rhoda, who was at Rome. After many years I met her again, and began to love her as a sister." As Hermas was on the road to Cumae, he had a vision of Rhoda, who was presumably dead. She told him that she was his accuser in heaven, on account of an unchaste thought he had once had concerning her, though only in passing; he was to pray for forgiveness for himself and his entire house. He is consoled by a vision of the Church in the form of an aged woman, weak and helpless from the sins of the faithful, who tells him to do penance and to correct the sins of his children. Subsequently he sees her made younger through penance, yet wrinkled and with white hair; then again, as quite young but still with white hair -- this is the Church of the forgiven. Lastly, she shows herself all glorious as a Bride -- this is the Church of the end of the days. In the second vision she gives Hermas a book, which she afterwards takes back in order to add to it. He is to give this writing to the presbyters, who will read it to the people; another copy is for "Grapte", who will communicate it to the widows; and a third is to be sent by Clement to the foreign Churches, "for this is his office".

The fifth vision, which is represented as taking place twenty days after the fourth, introduces "the Angel of repentance" in the likeness of a shepherd, from whom the whole work takes its name. He delivers to Hermas a series of precepts as to the belief in one God, simplicity, truthfulness, chastity, long-suffering, faith, fear, continence, confidence, cheerfulness, humility, good desires. These form an interesting development of early Christian ethics. The only point which needs special mention is the assertion of a husband's obligation to take back an adulterous wife on her repentance. The eleventh mandate, on humility, is concerned with false prophets who desire to occupy the first seats (that is to say, among the presbyters). It is possible that we have here a reference to Marcion, who came to Rome about 142 - 144 AD and desired to be admitted among the priests (or possibly even to become pope). After those come ten similitudes (*parabolai*) in the form of visions, which are explained by the angel. The longest of these (#9) is an elaboration of the parable of the building of a tower, which had formed the matter of the third vision. The tower is the Church, and the stones of which it is built are the faithful. It is clearly pointed out that all the baptized are included, though they may be cast out for grave sins, and can be readmitted only after penance.

The whole book is thus concerned with the Christian virtues and their exercise. It is an ethical, not a theological, work. The intention is above all to preach repentance. A single chance of restoration after fall is given to Christians, and this opportunity is spoken of as something new, which had never been clearly published before. The writer is pained by the sins of the faithful and is sincerely anxious for their conversion and return to good works. As a layman, Hermas avoids dogma.

Authorship and Date:

The reference to St. Clement as pope would give the date 89-99 for at least the first two visions. On the other hand, if the writer is identified with the Hermas mentioned by St. Paul, an earlier date becomes probable, unless he wrote as a very old man. But three ancient witnesses, one of whom claims to be contemporary, declare that he was the brother of Pope St. Pius I, who was not earlier than 140 – 155 AD. These three are (a) the Muratorian fragment; (b) the Liberian catalogue of popes, in a portion which dates from 235 (Hippolytus?); (c) the poem of Pseudo-Tertullian against Marcion, of the third or fourth century. (a) "And very recently, in our own times, in the city of Rome, Herma wrote the Pastor, when his brother Pius, the bishop, sat upon the see of the Church of the city of Rome. And therefore that [book] ought to be perused, but it cannot be publicly read to the people assembled in church, neither among the Prophets, whose number is complete, nor among the Apostles [who came] in the end of times." (b) "Under his [Pius's] episcopate, his brother Ermes wrote a book in which are contained the precepts which the angel delivered to him, coming to him in the guise of a Shepherd." (c) "Then, after him, Pius, whose brother according to the flesh was Hermas, the angelic shepherd, because he spoke the words given to him. Hermas used citations from Gospel of St. John, Ephesians, Hebrews and other Pauline Epistles, and I Peter. But the books he most certainly and most often uses are the Epistle of St. James and the Apocalypse.

The followings are some questions about interpretations in the book:

QUESTION 1: In his second Vision, Hermas sees an old woman and later in the vision, we discover that it is actually the church. What does this vision mean?

In his vision, Hermas saw the church as an old woman, young woman and a strong woman. Each state of these visions is a symbol which refers to a specific character of the church. And so the old woman refers to the church which was in God's thought before creation of the world and for her everything is created and Heavens and earth pronounce her glory which is the same of God's Glory. The young woman refers to the strength of the church as it is established on Christ Who is the Cornerstone and so the church does not know aging or death so it will remain young forever. The strong woman refers to the endurance of the church for persecution and torture so although the church faced and faces torture and persecutions, she will remain strong forever as Christ protects her all time. So all of these visions should not be understood literally but instead should be understood spiritually. Yes, literally the church involves the true believers of Christ as the church is literally the body of Christ. But spiritually, Hermas' visions showed some of the characters of this church which denote God's love for every one of us. In conclusion, the church was in God's thought before creation of world and for her everything is created (old woman), she will remain young never know aging or death (young woman) and will remain strong whatever persecutions or tortures (strong woman).

QUESTION 2: In the last part of the 3rd vision, he said "But I, shameless as I yet was, asked her, "Is repentance possible for all those stones which have been cast away and did not fit into the building of the tower, and will they yet have a place in this tower?" "Repentance," said she, "is yet possible, but in this tower they cannot find a suitable place. But in another and much inferior place they will be laid, and that, too, only when they have been tortured and completed the days of their sins. And on this account will they be transferred, because they have partaken of the righteous Word. And then only will they be removed from their punishments when the thought of repenting of the evil deeds which they have done has come into their hearts. But if it does not come into their hearts, they will not be saved, on account of the hardness of their heart. What is another place? What is the other place? How they will be saved with repentance after death?"

To answer the question, two points should be clarified first:

1. The tower here refers to the church on the earth and each stone in this tower is a symbol of each one of the true believers of Christ. Each believer here on the earth has his own talents that God gave him and with all other believers one homogenous perfect tower is built and this tower appears as it is built of one stone only. "...built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner [stone]; In whom all the building fitly framed together growth unto an holy temple in the Lord: In whom ye also are built together for an habitation of God through the Spirit." (Ephesians 2:21).

2. At Hermas' time, there were some teachers in the church who taught that there is no repentance after baptism and everyone who sins after baptism has no place for repentance, no place in heavens and so must be excommunicated from the church. But according to the Orthodox faith that taught by Christ Himself and His righteous Apostles, the door of repentance will remain open till the last moment of person's life as we saw the right thief repented in the last moment of his life and The Lord accepted his repentance. So Hermas here in his vision tried to convince those non-orthodox teachers by their mistakes in this teaching and clarify and support the orthodox teaching regarding repentance after baptism.

3. Upon the points we mentioned before, it is clear now what this vision means: (a) death by water means baptism, without which nobody can go to heaven (John 3:5, Romans 6:4 and verse 75, 76 of Hermas' vision. We have 75: And what are the rest which fell by the water, and could not roll into the water? 76: They are such as have heard the word and were willing to be baptized in the name of the Lord, but considering the great holiness which the truth requires, have withdrawn themselves and walked again after their wicked lusts"). (b) So saving after death which means here now baptism is possible by true repentance about our sins and lusts that we did after our death with Christ in baptism and doing good deeds. (c) By our true repentance and our good deeds The Lord will return us again to his tower (the church) to be only one complete perfect tower that appears as made of one single stone.

4. So we saw now Hermas tried to correct the non-orthodox faith at his time which stated repentance is impossible after baptism (death with Christ) and he taught through his vision that the door of repentance will still open before everyone after baptism (death with Christ) till the last moment of person's life. It is the mercy and love of God, for His Holy Name, the praise and glory. Amen.

CONCLUSION: The Shepherd of Hermas one of the first or second century's fathers (100 – 160 AD) and the author of the book called "The Shepherd", a work which had great authority in the early church and was ranked with Holy Scripture. The book contained consists of five visions, twelve mandates, or commandments, and ten similitudes, or parables. The topics in the book are about the Church, repentance, Baptism, and the declaration that Christ is the Son of God. The whole book is primarily concerned with the Christian virtues and their exercise. It is an ethical, not a theological book. The intention is above all to preach repentance.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

8. THE DIDACHE

SERVANT PREPARATION:

REFERENCES: There are many references on this topic. Some well known references include

- i) 2000 Years of Coptic Christianity by Otto Meinardus
- ii) The Apostolic Fathers, Edited by Jack Sparks.
- iii) The Early Church, by Henry Chadwick
- iv) Writings of the Ante-Nicene, Nicene, and post-Nicene Fathers.

VERSE: "Jesus answered, "Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit" (John 3:5-6).

LESSON PREPARATION

OBJECTIVES: The objective of this lesson is to learn about this important book called the Didache, and to understand its impact on the early church.

INTRODUCTION:

The *Didache*, or *The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* (*Didachē* means "Teaching") is a brief early Christian treatise, dated by most scholars to the mid to late first century. The first line of this treatise is "*Teaching of the Lord to the Gentiles (or Nations) by the Twelve Apostles.*"

The Didache may be the oldest of known documents of Christian antiquity. It has been said to be undoubtedly the most ancient church "manual" in mankind's possession. In the early church, historically recorded, particularly in the nation of Egypt, the Didache was held worthy of great respect and is documented as often quoted from by St. Clement of Alexandria as well as St. Athanasius the Apostolic.

The Didache entails educational teaching and church order specifically Christian in characterization. This means there is no evidence of Jewish indoctrination, nor does it address Judaism as the first problem encountered within the early Christian Church's conception. The Didache's language is simplistic which places it written at a time period very close to the Apostolic Era. This is postulated to be the initial period of change from the writings of the New Testament to those writings of the Church. Many theologians date the book written in its entirety sometime about the last third of the first century making its accuracy of teaching valid.

The Didache further refers to the stability of the Church, which had been realized as the Apostolic Era drew to a close, as well as it makes reference to many quotes from the Holy Gospel of St. Matthew. It has no known author, nor does the Didache directly point to apostolic authorship. Rather the inner writer writes about the doctrine of the Lord Jesus Christ as taught to the nations by the apostles. Therefore, it can be correctly surmised that the Lord's teachings to the apostles were shared with the Gentiles through evangelistic efforts.

Its place of origin is stated by many scholars to be Alexandria, Egypt. What evidence concurs with this? Alexandria, Egypt was said to use the apostolic church order (the Egyptian church order) which is found under the Christian church ethics section of the Didache, statements within the Didache were quoted by Egyptian authors such as St. Clement of Alexandria with history recording this, and further evidence supporting this is the Egyptian Bishop Serapion in the 4th century used it in His Grace's Eucharistic Prayers.

LESSON BODY: What purpose does this document give to the Christians today? It gives evidence pointing to the apostolic beginnings of our Church first and foremost. It did not reveal evangelism's teaching of the day but rather revealed the treasures of the Christian life at the end of the first century and in the second century with the rituals of that time, instructions of organization, and regulations for liturgical functions. It gives rise to the human imagination of how church law in the East and in the West originated.

Specifics are astounding such as baptism was undeniably practiced by immersion (it spoke to running water in the rivers and immersion). Baptism by pouring water from a vessel or from the hand was allowed only in cases of scarcity of water or to sick persons who could not leave their beds. Fasting was necessary on Wednesdays and Fridays. Receiving the Holy Eucharist regularly was essential.

The Didache is not considered a book of the New Testament. Pope Athanasius emphasized that it was not canonized. Its purpose to us may lie in the fact that the Lord's teachings to the apostles were simply recorded by an inner unknown writer as a result of the apostles' evangelistic efforts following the Pentecost. It gives us perhaps a look into how the Lord Jesus Christ shaped His disciples for church greatness.

The discovery of the Didache was only a whisper of the teachings and the extraordinary talents which lay within the apostles. The disciples were twelve ordinary men similar in human likeness to many of us today. The disciples were twelve men who could not fathom the power of God, who struggled with their own sins, had difficulty with absolute commitment, yet, who found faith.

With this ever challenged faith a handful of common fishermen, a despised tax collector, and a political zealot- together comprising twelve men- become a force that would forever impact the world. This is not fiction or myth. They were not earthly prophets or saints. They were not priests or religious scholars of the day. They were not even educators or orators. They were unremarkably human, but with faith and obedience to the Lord Jesus Christ they conquered the world in His Name and that's an undeniable, undisputable historically recorded fact! May we all give homage to those who did what He wanted them to do and ask to be worthy to pray:

"Just as You were with Your disciples, O Savior, and gave them peace, graciously come also and be with us, and grant us Your peace, and save us, and deliver our souls" (2nd Watch, Midnight Prayers).

Contents of the Didache:

The text, parts of which constitute has three main sections dealing with Christian ethics, rituals such as baptism and Eucharist, and Church organization. It is considered the first example of the *genre* of the Church Orders.

Lost for centuries, a Greek manuscript of the Didache was rediscovered in 1873 by Philotheos Bryennios, Metropolitan of Nicomedia in the Codex Hierosolymitanus. Hitchcock and Brown produced the first English translation in March 1884.



Philotheos Bryennios, who re-discovered the Didache

The *Didache* is mentioned by Eusebius (c. 324) as the *Teachings of the Apostles* following the books recognized as canonical:

"Let there be placed among the spurious works the *Acts of Paul*, the so-called *Shepherd* and the *Apocalypse of Peter*, and besides these the *Epistle of Barnabas*, and what are called the *Teachings of the Apostles*, and also the *Apocalypse of John*, if this be thought proper; for as I wrote before, some reject it, and others place it in the canon."

St. Athanasius (367) and Rufinus (c. 380) list the *Didache* among the apocrypha. It is accepted by the Apostolic Constitutions Canon 85 and the Oriental Orthodox Church. The section *Two Ways* shares the same language with the *Epistle of Barnabas*, chapters 18–20, sometimes word for word, sometimes added to, dislocated, or abridged, and Barnabas iv, 9 either derives from *Didache*, 16, 2–3, or vice versa. There can also be seen many similarities to the Epistles of both Saints *Polycarp* and *Ignatius of Antioch*. The *Shepherd of Hermas* seems to reflect it, and Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen of Alexandria also seem to use the work, and so in the West do Optatus and the *Gesta apud Zenophilum*. The *Didascalia Apostolorum* are founded upon the *Didache*. The *Apostolic Church-Ordinances* has used a part, the *Apostolic Constitutions* have embodied the *Didascalia*. There are echoes in Saints Justin Martyr, Tatian, Theophilus of Antioch, Cyprian, and Lactantius.

The contents may be divided into four parts, which most scholars agree were combined from separate sources by a later redactor: the first is the *Two Ways*, the Way of Life and the Way of Death (chapters 1–6); the second part is a ritual dealing with baptism, fasting, and Communion (chapters 7–10); the third speaks of the ministry and how to deal with traveling prophets (chapters 11–15); and the final section (chapter 16) is a brief apocalypse.

The Two Ways:

The first section (Chapters 1–6) begins: "There are **two ways**, one of life and one of death, and there is a great difference between these **two ways**."

In *Apostolic Fathers*, 2nd ed., Lightfoot-Harmer-Holmes, 1992, notes:

The Two Ways material appears to have been intended, in light of 7.1, as a summary of basic instruction about the Christian life to be taught to those who were preparing for baptism and church membership. In its present form it represents the Christianization of a common Jewish form of moral instruction. Similar material is found in a number of other Christian writings from the first through about the fifth centuries, including the *Epistle of Barnabas*, the *Didascalia*, the *Apostolic Church Ordinances*, the *Summary of Doctrine*, the *Apostolic Constitutions*, the *Life of Schnudi*, and *On the Teaching of the Apostles (or Doctrina)*, some of which are dependent on the *Didache*. The interrelationships between these various documents, however, are quite complex and much remains to be worked out.

The closest parallels in the use of the Two Ways doctrine is found among the Essene Jews at the Dead Sea Scrolls community. The Qumran community included a Two Ways teaching in its founding Charter, The Community Rule.

Throughout the **Two Ways**, there are many Old Testament quotes shared with the Gospels and many theological similarities, but Jesus is never mentioned by name. The first chapter opens with the Shema ("you shall love God"), the Great Commandment ("your neighbor as yourself"), and the Golden Rule in the negative form. Then comes short extracts in common with the Sermon on the Mount, together with a curious passage on giving and receiving, which is also cited with variations in *Shepherd of Hermas* (Mand., ii, 4–6). The Latin omits 1:3–6 and 2:1, and these sections have no parallel in *Epistle of Barnabas*; therefore, they may be a later addition, suggesting *Hermas* and the present text of the *Didache* may have used a common source, or one may have relied on the other. Chapter 2 contains the commandments against murder, adultery, corrupting boys, sexual promiscuity, theft, magic, sorcery, abortion, infanticide, coveting, perjury, false testimony, speaking evil, holding grudges, being double-minded, not acting as you speak, greed, avarice, hypocrisy, maliciousness, arrogance, plotting evil against neighbors, hate, narcissism and expansions on these generally, with references to the words of

Jesus. Chapter 3 attempts to explain how one vice leads to another: anger to murder, concupiscence to adultery, and so forth. The whole chapter is excluded in Barnabas. A number of precepts are added in chapter 4, which ends: "This is the Way of Life." Verse 13 states you must not forsake the Lord's commandments, neither adding nor subtracting (see also Deut 4:2,12:32). The Way of Death (chapter 5) is a list of vices to be avoided. Chapter 6 exhorts to the keeping in the Way of this Teaching:

See that no one causes you to err from this way of the teaching, since apart from God it teaches you. For if you are able to bear the entire yoke of the Lord, you will be perfect; but if you are not able to do this, do what you are able. And concerning food, bear what you are able; but against that which is sacrificed to idols be exceedingly careful; for it is the service of dead gods. (Roberts)

The Didache, like 1 Corinthians 10:21, does not give an absolute prohibition on eating meat which has been offered to idols, but merely advises to be careful.

Church Sacraments:

Baptism: The second part (chapters 7 to 10) begins with an instruction on baptism, which is to be conferred "in the Name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" in "living water". The baptized and the baptizer, and, if possible, anyone else attending the sacrament should fast for one or two days beforehand.

Eucharist: Chapter 9 concerns the Eucharist ("thanksgiving"):

"Now concerning the Eucharist, give thanks this way. First, concerning the cup: We thank thee, our Father, for the holy vine of David Thy servant, which Thou madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory forever.

And concerning the broken body of Christ:

"We thank Thee, our Father, for the life and knowledge which Thou madest known to us through Jesus Thy Servant; to Thee be the glory for ever. So let Thy Church be gathered together from the ends of the earth into Thy kingdom; for Thine is the glory and the power through Jesus Christ forever. But let no one eat or drink of your Eucharist, unless they have been baptized into the name of the Lord; for concerning this also the Lord has said, "Give not that which is holy to the dogs."

Fasting: Chapter 8 suggests that fasts are not to be on Monday and Thursday "with the hypocrites" — presumably non-Christian Jews — but on Wednesday and Friday. Nor must Christians pray with their Judaic brethren, instead they shall say the Lord's Prayer three times a day. The text of the prayer is not identical to the version in the Gospel of Matthew, and it is given with the doxology "for Thine is the power and the glory for ever." The Didache is the main source for the inclusion of the doxology. It does not occur within the oldest copies of the texts of Matthew and Luke

Revelation 22:17 (KJV), to which the prayer in Didache 10 bears some similarity.

Chapter 10 gives a thanksgiving after a meal. It speaks of the Eucharist, the "spiritual food and drink and life eternal through Thy Servant" that it distinguishes from the "food and drink (given) to men for enjoyment that they might give thanks to (God)". After a doxology, as before, come the apocalyptic exclamations: "Let grace come, and let this world pass away. Hosanna to the God (Son) of David! If any one is holy, let him come; if anyone is not so, let him repent. Maranatha. Amen". The prayer is reminiscent of Revelation 22:17–20 and 1 Corinthians 16:22.

Gospel of St. Matthew and the Didache

Significant similarities between the Didache and the gospel of St. Matthew have been found as these writings share words, phrases, and motifs. This close relationship between these two writings might suggest that both documents were created in the same historical and geographical setting. One argument that suggests a common environment is that the community of both the Didache and the gospel of St. Matthew was probably composed of Jewish Christians from the beginning. Also, the Two Ways teaching (Did. 1–6) may have served as a pre-baptismal instruction within the community of the Didache and St. Matthew. Furthermore, the correspondence of the Trinitarian baptismal formula in the Didache and Matthew (Did. 7 and Matt 28:19) as well as the similar shape of the Lord's Prayer (Did. 8 and Matt 6:5–13) appear to reflect the use of similar oral traditions. Finally, both the community of the Didache (Did. 11–13) and Matthew (Matt 7:15–23; 10:5–15, 40–42; 24:11,24) were visited by apostles and prophets.

CONCLUSION: The Didache was a very important book with important teachings in the Apostolic era, focusing on topics such as Baptism, the Eucharist, and fasting. It has many similarities to books in the New Testament including the Gospel of St. Matthew and the Book of Revelation. It also contains connections to the writings of Saints Ignatius, Polycarp, and others.

VERSE TO REMEMBER: “And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17).

8. UNIT REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Who is **not** one of the disciples of Christ?

- a) St. John
- b) St. Luke
- c) St. Matthew
- d) St. Peter

2. Which person is one of the disciples of Christ?

- a) St. Mark
- b) St. Paul
- c) St. Thomas
- d) St. Barnabas

3. St. Justin Martyr was one of the early Christian

- a) Apologists
- b) Theologists
- c) Methodists
- d) Baptists

4. Apostolic fathers focus their writings on:

- a) Traditions and faith.
- b) Faith and Theology.
- c) Theology and sacraments.
- d) Sacraments and traditions.

5. St. Justin Martyr wrote mainly:

- a) 2 apologies and the Dialogue with Trypho.
- b) 3 Dialogues with Trypho.
- c) 1 Dialogue with Trypho and one with St. Paul.
- d) 3 apologies.

6. The Apostolic fathers lived:

- a) After the Nicene council.
- b) Before the Nicene council.
- c) Before the council of Jerusalem.
- d) After St. Athanasius.

7. An Apologetic in Christianity is:

- a) One who defends the faith by humility and apologies?
- b) One who defends the faith by finding apologies for others?
- c) One who defends the faith by logic, philosophy, and reasoning?
- d) One who defends the faith by fighting enemies?

8. St. Clement was the bishop of:

- a) Antioch
- b) Smyrna
- c) Rome
- d) Jerusalem

9. Scholars agree that St. Clement had a direct relation with:

- a) St. John and St. Peter
- b) St. John and St. Mark
- c) St. Paul and St. Peter
- d) St. Paul and St. Luke

10. The apostolic father that was burned alive was:

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr

11. St. Ignatius was

- a) Born Christian
- b) Converted to Christianity at young age
- c) Converted to Christianity at old age
- d) Ordained Bishop of Jerusalem

12. St. Polycarp was

- a) Born Christian
- b) Converted to Christianity at young age
- c) Converted to Christianity at old age
- d) Ordained Bishop of Rome

13. St. Ignatius was the bishop of

- a) Antioch
- b) Smyrna
- c) Rome
- d) Jerusalem

14. The bishop who offered a meal to the soldiers coming to arrest him for martyrdom was:

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr

15. St. Polycarp was the bishop of

- a) Antioch
- b) Smyrna
- c) Rome
- d) Jerusalem

16. St. Polycarp Received a personal letter from:

- a) St. Clement
- b) St. Justin
- c) St. John
- d) St. Ignatius

17. St. Ignatius was the disciple of

- a) St. Peter
- b) St. Paul
- c) St. Thomas
- d) St. John

18. St. Polycarp learned a lot from the apostles but mainly was the disciple of

- a) St. Peter
- b) St. Paul
- c) St. Thomas
- d) St. John

19. The only letter that was left behind by Saint Polycarp was the letter to the:

- a) Colossians
- b) Philippians
- c) Samaritans
- d) Corinthians



20. Whose picture is this?

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr



21. Whose picture is this?

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr

22. St. Clement wrote a letter to the:

- a) Colossians
- b) Philippians
- c) Samaritans
- d) Corinthians

23. St. Ignatius wrote a letter to the ----- asking them not to stop his martyrdom:

- a) Colossians
- b) Romans
- c) Samaritans
- d) Corinthians

24. In the Book of Revelation, the only message that found no fault in the bishop of that church was:

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr

25. The writings of the Shepherd of Hermas mainly consists of:

- a) Visions, commandments and parables.
- b) Visions, promises and lessons.
- c) Promises, commandments and poetry.
- d) Visions, promises, and poetry

26. In his second Vision, Hermas sees an old woman and later in the vision, we discover that it is actually

- a) The church
- b) Human soul
- c) Saint Mary
- d) Christ

27. In the last part of the 3rd vision the stones in this tower are a symbol of:

- a) The Apostles
- b) The Martyrs
- c) The Believers
- d) The Priests

28. At Hermas' time, there were some teachers in the church who taught that:

- a) There is no need for repentance after baptism.
- b) Who sins after baptism has no place for repentance.
- c) Baptism and repentance are not related.
- d) Baptism is the only way to repentance.

29. The main sections of the Didache do NOT include:

- a) Dealing with Christian ethics
- b) Rituals such as baptism and Eucharist
- c) Church organization
- d) Priest clothing

30. The teachings of the Apostles are primarily in:

- a) The Didache
- b) The Katamaros
- c) The book of "The Shepherd of Hermas"
- d) The Deacons Book

31. The Didache was embedded in:

- a) The Katamarous
- b) The Didascalia
- c) The Agpeya
- d) The Defnar

32. The major parts of the Didache do NOT include:

- a) The 2 ways
- b) Ritual dealing with baptism, fasting, and Communion.
- c) how to deal with traveling prophets
- d) The order of the liturgical prayer

33. The Apostolic Fathers are:

- a) The fathers of the Apostles
- b) The disciples of Jesus Christ
- c) The disciples of the Apostles
- d) Prophets in the Old Testament

34. The first pope of the Coptic Church is:

- a) St. Peter
- b) St. Mark
- c) St. Paul
- d) St. Luke

35. Monophysite means:

- a) Christ only has a divine nature
- b) Christ has two natures: a divine and a human nature
- c) Christ has two natures (divine and human) united into one nature
- d) Christ's human nature dissolved in His divine nature

36. Miaphysite means:

- a) Christ only has a divine nature
- b) Christ has two natures: a divine and a human nature
- c) Christ has two natures (divine and human) united into one nature
- d) Christ's human nature dissolved in His divine nature

37. Arian Heresy is:

- a) Christ has one nature, Divine
- b) Christ has two natures (divine and human) united into one nature
- c) Christ is God
- d) Christ was created by God the Father

38. Macedonian Heresy is:

- a) The Holy Spirit was not a person but rather a "power" of God
- b) The Holy Spirit is one person in the Trinity
- c) The Holy Spirit is equal to the Father and the Son
- d) The Son is not equal to the Father

39. Nestorian Heresy is:

- a) Virgin Mary is the mother of God
- b) Virgin Mary was not the mother of God but rather the mother of Jesus the man
- c) Christ is God
- d) Jesus is the Son of God

40. Which of those is not an Eastern Orthodox Church?:

- a) Greek Orthodox Church
- b) Russian Orthodox Church
- c) Antiochian Orthodox Church
- d) Armenian Orthodox Church

41. The apologies of St. Justin Martyr were about:

- a) The apostles and their stories
- b) The story of his conversion to Christianity
- c) Theological reasoning on Christ as the Logos, the Eucharist, Baptism, and the Resurrection
- d) Defensive reasoning against the Arian Heresy

42. St. Justin Martyr was beheaded in:

- a) 33 A.D
- b) 165 A.D
- c) 300 A.D
- d) 465 A.D

43. The first Apostolic father of the church is:

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr

44. St. Clement of Rome's letter to the Corinthian church focused on:

- a) Explanation for the creed
- b) The sacraments of the church
- c) The divinity of Christ
- d) The Christian agape

45. The first to use the term "Catholic Church" was:

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement of Rome
- c) St. Paul
- d) St. Polycarp

46. St. Ignatius was martyred in

- a) Ephesus
- b) Rome
- c) Troas
- d) Jerusalem

47. How many years did St. Polycarp serve our Lord Jesus Christ?

- a) 32
- b) 5
- c) 86
- d) 66

48. Who said these words: "I have served him these 86 years, and he never did me any harm, but much good, and how can I blaspheme my King and my Savior?"

- a) St. Clement of Rome
- b) St. Justin Martyr
- c) St. Ignatius
- d) St. Polycarp

49. The Shepherd of Hermas wrote a book called:

- a) The Didache
- b) The Shepherd
- c) The Apostolic Fathers
- d) The Screwtape Letters

50. The strong woman in St. Hermas' vision refers to:

- a) The strength of the church as it is established on Christ Who is the Cornerstone
- b) The church which was in God's thought before creation of the world
- c) The endurance of the church for persecution
- d) The church in the era of the apostles

51. The young woman in St. Hermas' vision refers to:

- a) The strength of the church as it is established on Christ Who is the Cornerstone
- b) The church which was in God's thought before creation of the world
- c) The endurance of the church for persecution
- d) The church in the era of the apostles

52. The old woman in St. Hermas' vision refers to:

- a) The strength of the church as it is established on Christ Who is the Cornerstone
- b) The church which was in God's thought before creation of the world
- c) The endurance of the church for persecution
- d) The church in the era of the apostles

53. The door of repentance will remain open till:

- a) The last moment of person's life
- b) The person is baptized
- c) After the person dies
- d) The person is married

54. The Lord will return us again to his tower (the church) to be only one complete perfect tower that appears as made of one single stone by:

- a) the number of hours we spend in service
- b) the amount of tithe we offer
- c) the number of sacrifices we give
- d) true repentance and good deeds

55. Who is the author of the Didache?:

- a) St. Matthew
- b) St. Athanasius the Apostolic
- c) It has no known author
- d) St. Clement of Alexandria

56. Its place of origin is stated by many scholars to be:

- a) Smyrna
- b) Alexandria
- c) Ephesus
- d) Rome

57. The Didache explains that baptism in the first century during the apostolic period is practiced by:

- a) Pouring water
- b) Sprinkling of water
- c) Immersion in water
- d) Drinking water

58. Baptism by pouring water from a vessel or from the hand was allowed only in cases of:

- a) Scarcity of water
- b) Sick persons who could not leave their beds
- c) It's totally not allowed
- d) A. and B.

59. The Didache shares many similarities with:

- a) The Gospel according to St. Luke
- b) The Gospel according to St. Mark
- c) The Gospel according to St. Matthew
- d) The book of Acts



60. Whose picture is this?

- a) The Shepherd of Hermas
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr



61. Whose picture is this?

- a) St. Ignatius
- b) St. Clement
- c) St. Polycarp
- d) St. Justin Martyr

Answers:

- 1. B
- 2. C
- 3. A
- 4. D
- 5. A

6. B

7. C

8. C

9. C

10. C

11. B

12. A

13. A

14. C

15. B

16. D

17. D

18. D

19. B

20. A

21. B

22. D

23. B

24. C

25. A

26. A

27. C

28. B

29. D

30. A

31. B

32. D

33. C

34. B

35. A

36. C

37. D

38. A

39. B

40. D

41. C

42. B

43. B

44. D

45. A

46. B

47. C

48. D

49. B

50. C

51. A

52. B

53. A

54. D

55. C

56. B

57. C

58. D

59. C

60. A

61. C