



ROOTS

TRACING THE CHURCH FROM PENTECOST TO TODAY

Mike Taylor

www.TaylorNotes.Info



Part 3: The Christian Middle Ages (AD 590-1517)

A. Overview

During the Middle Ages man assumed the role of the head of the catholic church. This resulted in adopting false beliefs that eventually resulted in church corruption. Eventually this corruption was openly opposed by men called early reformers who prepared the way for Martin Luther and the Reformation.

B. The Rise of Papal Power (AD 590-604)

In 590, Rome was in agony, suffering from invasions of pagan tribes from the north. The atrocities of war and the breakdown of needed leadership weakened the empire. Emperor Justin appointed Pope Gregory (A.D. 540-604) as mayor of Rome - the first pope to receive such great secular power. Gregory was more of a lawyer and had exceptional administrative skills but was not a trained theologian.

C. The Emergence of the Roman Catholic Church (AD 600-1500)

During this period, the catholic (universal) church slowly morphed into the Roman Catholic Church as it began to adopt aberrant doctrines. These included the concept of purgatory, directing prayers to Mary, kissing the pope's feet, the sale of indulgences to reduce time in purgatory, transubstantiation, sacerdotalism, grace through the seven sacraments, and more.

D. The Rise of Islam (AD 570-632)

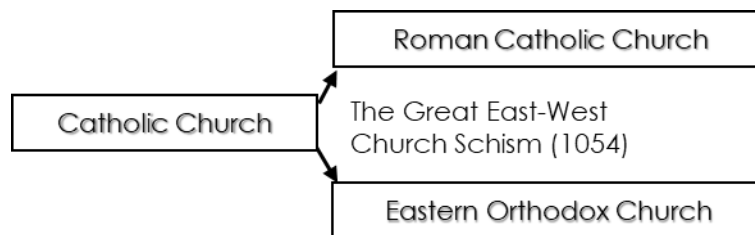
Mohammed (A.D. 570-632) claimed to be a direct descendent of Ishmael. Historical evidence states that he was given to fits in his early life. He was orphaned at an early age and was profoundly dissatisfied with polytheism and superstitions in

Mecca. Being deeply religious, he lived in a cave for seclusion and meditation and was prone to unusual dreams. Mohammed was a poet rather than a theologian.

E. The Holy Roman Empire (AD 800-1806)

The Holy Roman Empire was a mainly Germanic conglomeration of lands in Central Europe during the Middle Ages. It was neither holy nor Roman and was ruled by an emperor, beginning with Charles I (Charlemagne) in AD 800. The emperor was crowned in a special ceremony, traditionally performed by the Pope in Rome. Without that coronation, no king, despite exercising all powers, could call himself emperor. It was also during this time that feudalism existed.

F. The Church Does the "Splits" (AD 1054)



Within the Catholic Church, two religious figures dominated; the pope in Rome (West) and the Patriarch in Constantinople (East). The intense rivalry between these two figures created a delicate balance that eventually ruptured in A.D. 1054 when the Eastern Orthodox Church, led by the Patriarch of Constantinople, broke away from the western church in Rome. The issues stemmed back over 500 years due to differences in the use of icons, the wording of the Nicene Creed, and differences in languages.

G. The Crusades 1 Win/7 Losses (AD 1066-1248)



The Crusades were a series of religious wars blessed by the Pope and the Catholic Church, with the stated goal of restoring Christian access to the holy places in and near Jerusalem. The Crusades were originally launched in response to a call from the leaders of the Byzantine Empire for help to fight the expansion into Anatolia of Muslim Turks who had cut off access to Jerusalem. Of the eight crusades, only one was successful. They were in general, a dismal failure.

H. The Inquisition (1100s-1400s)

The Inquisition was a powerful office set up within the Catholic Church to root out and punish heresy (non-Catholic Christian religions) throughout Europe and the Americas. Beginning in the 12th century and continuing for hundreds of years, the Inquisition is infamous for the severity of its tortures and its persecution of Jews and Muslims. Its worst manifestation was in Spain, where the Spanish Inquisition was a dominant force for more than 200 years, resulting in some 32,000 executions.¹

I. Scholasticism (AD 1200s-1300s)

Scholasticism was a period during the 1200s to 1300s when it was viewed that God could be understood only through human reasoning. The adopted method which was used to resolve relevant issues, called dialectical reasoning², was to first raise a question, then develop all possible answers to the question, and finally to select the best one. One prominent Christian scholastic was Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), whose work was later declared to be the official teachings of the Roman Catholic Church by Pope Leo 13th in 1879.

J. The Papal Schism (1378-1418)

The Western Schism or Papal Schism was a split within the Catholic Church from 1378 to 1418. At one time three men simultaneously claimed to be the true pope. Driven by politics rather than any theological disagreement, the schism was ended by the Council of Constance (1414–1418). The rival claims to the papal chair hurt the reputation of the office. The Western Schism is sometimes called the Great Schism

K. The Renaissance (1300s-1500s)



During the Middle Ages many people were dissatisfied with the quality of life and wanted to go back to the Greek and Roman ways of life—the better ways of the past. The result was a "rebirth" in intellectual pursuits, a revitalized interest in the arts, science, literature, and a more efficient government system. However, the church had become so corrupted by this time that humanism (dependence of humans instead of God) became the

¹ History.com <www.history.com/topics/religion/inquisition>.

² A discourse between two or more people holding different points of view about a subject but wishing to establish the truth through reasoned argumentation.

primary focus in life. Man became the center of everything and God was pushed to the side. The Renaissance began in Italy around A.D 1300 and spread to England, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and other countries.

L. The Early Reformers (AD 1140-1517)



John Wycliffe and certain other theologians from various parts of Europe have been dubbed "Reformers before the Reformation" because of their opposition to fundamental Catholic doctrines and practices about a hundred years before the actual Protestant Reformation began. Their primary concerns were with the church's elevation of itself over scripture, the restriction to public preaching, the selling of indulgences, transubstantiation, worship of saints, prayers for the dead, oaths, and priestly confession.

Three significant early reformers include Peter Waldo (1140-1217), John Wycliffe (1329-1384), and John Hus (1372-1415). This period continued up to the start of the Protestant Reformation in 1517.

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