

BARRIERS & BRIDGES WEEK 1

“Timeline & Overview”

Why so many different varieties of churches?

- Where did they come from?
- What are the differences?
- Why are there differences?

Church history is a record of the good, the bad, and the ugly of the people of God. If we are wise we will learn and grow from it.

Christianity- the city.

Denominations- the neighborhoods.

Churches- the houses.

THE AGE OF JESUS & THE APOSTLES

Matthew 28:18-20 The Great Commission,
The nations of Pentecost, Acts 1:8

What is an apostle?

- The word “apostle” literally means “sent one”
- apostles were eye witnesses to the resurrected Jesus which led to more trust and authority
- apostle’s names are recorded in the New Testament
- after Acts 1 there is no record of apostles being replaced
- Paul was an unusual apostle (1 Corinthians 15:8)

PERSECUTION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

Jewish Persecution

- Jesus and his original disciples were Jewish
- The New Testament is filled with conflict between Judaism and those who follow Jesus
- Stephen was the first martyr (Acts 7)

Roman Persecution

- Rome hated the Jews and the Jews hated Rome
- Rome was its own state religion with Caesar as their god
- The Coliseum
- Death of the apostles

THE AGE OF CATHOLIC CHRISTIANITY : AD 70 – 312

- Catholic means universal. This term was used many years before the Roman Catholic Church formed.
- The church had spread to many different regions over 3 continents
- Councils & Creeds; The Apostle’s Creed
- Heresy is widespread
 - Gnostics – hidden knowledge
 - Marcion – vengeful God of the OT v/s gentle Jesus of NT
 - Sabellius – modalism... God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are not distinct persons
 - Arius – Jesus is a lesser god – Bishop Nicholas (St. Nicholas) slapped Arius at the Council of Nicea

TROUBLE IN ROME

- The Roman Empire lasted 422 years (the USA turns 247 in 2023)
Some reasons for Rome’s fall- political instability, economic & social problems, inability to protect their vast domain from outsiders
- In 313 AD Emperor Constantine professes Christianity

BOOKS & ARTICLES REFERENCED:

“Church History in Plain Language” book by Bruce L. Shelley

“The Apostolic Foundation of the Church” article at <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/essay/the-apostolic-foundation-of-the-church>

“Foxy’s Book of Martyrs” book by John Foxy

“Voice of the Martyrs” is an organization dedicated to telling stories of martyrs & praying for current hardships of people spreading the Gospel around the world <https://www.persecution.com>

“Know the Creeds And Councils” book by Justin S. Holcomb

“Know the Heretics” book by Justin S. Holcomb

“The New Evidence That Demands a Verdict” book by Josh McDowell