

# Church History

By

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**THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH****HOMEWORK:****READ:**

Lecture 1, and Textbook Chapters 1-4

**LISTEN:**

Cassette Lecture # 1

**ANSWER:**

Examination Questions

**The Instructor should determine whether the students are to fill in the outline from the cassette lecture or if it will be done during the class session.**

**SCORING:**

Advise the students to note the point value listed by each question in their study guide.

**PREVIEW:**

“Church History Introduction” takes the student from the Acts of the Apostles to modern times bridging the knowledge gap between the New Testament church and present day Christians. In sufficient detail to probe and explore the church’s life, the course is a faith affirming description of the body of Christ in the world, persecuted, triumphant, sinful, faithful; at times almost destroyed but always emerging in defiance of the “gates of hell.”

The student will find his Christian roots, meet his Christian family and be better equipped to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ in the tumult and exciting growth of the twentieth century. The course enhances and enriches the study of the Bible, revealing the fruit grown from the seed sown in the world by the Master, through the many deeds of his disciples over the past 2,000 years.

“Church History Introduction” is presented in twelve lessons divided into six major periods of history.

A.D. – 100 A.D.

1. The Apostolic Church

100 – 313 A.D.

2. The Persecuted Church

313 – 476 A.D.

3. The Imperial Church

476 –1435 A.D.

4. The Medieval Church: The Papacy and Islam
5. The Medieval Church: Crusades and Monasteries
6. The Medieval Church: Prelude to the Reformation

1453 – 1648 A.D.

7. The Reformation in Europe
8. The Reformation and Puritan Europe

1648 – 1982 A.D.

9. The Modern Church Takes Shape
10. Religion and Reform in Great Britain and Europe
11. The American Church in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries
12. The Church in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

**AGENDA:**

1. Review textbook and other resource books.
2. Give a clear outline of the six periods of church history in detail.
3. Expanded material to use at your discretion.
  - 1) Present a study of 6 apostolic churches presenting their life style, faith and fidelity to Jesus. (Resource material-McBirnie's "The New Testament Church".)
  - 2) Discuss Paul's use of his handicap (i.e., jail) – add the Fall of Jerusalem from the point of view of mature faith. Example- Jerusalem church grew in exciting ways – 5,000 people, imagine! They must have praised God! But then the persecutions CAME! The church ended! What would they think then? Only later they would understand that God intended them to be missionaries and works all things for good.
  - 3) Discuss church life at end of this period.
4. Bits and pieces
  - 1) The Ebionites
  - 2) Reasons for Nero and Domitian's persecutions.
  - 3) Make maps plotting missionary journeys (individual assignments)
5. Make class chart to expand each lesson night as the story of the church progresses.
6. Review the examination questions. Make certain that all class members participate. This is an important feature that motivates the students to continue doing the homework. Remember! The one who does the homework is the one who gets the learning.
7. Assign homework for next class.

**OUTLINE:**

- I. INTRODUCTION TO COURSE: Created by the Spirit, the church is protected by Jesus from the gates of hell.**
  - A. Reason for studying church history
    1. Church is the body of Christ.

- a. If we love Christ we will want to know what the body of Christ has done.  
(Col 1:18)
2. To be in touch with our spiritual roots.
3. To meet our 'other' Christian brothers and sisters.
4. To learn to endure perilous times – to overcome persecution.
5. To gain new awareness of power and subtlety of evil (the tars, Matt. 13:24)
6. To learn origins of denomination
7. To appreciate the church as the sources of faith
8. To become better church members and more faithful Christians
9. To avoid the error of the past
10. To see origins of sects, heresies, apostacies
11. To catch an exciting glimpse of Jesus still at work in His world.
12. To be a fully informed Christian.

## II. Outline of Course in Six Sections

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| A. The Apostolic Church  | 30-100 A.D.    |
| B. The Persecuted Church   | 100-313 A.D.   |
| C. The Imperial Church   | 313-476 A.D.   |
| D. The Medieval Church   | 476-1453 A.D.  |
| 1. The Papacy and Islam  |                |
| E. The Medieval Church, Part II                                    |                |
| 1. Crusades and Monasteries  |                |
| F. The Medieval Church, Part III                                   |                |
| 1. Prelude to Reformation  |                |
| G. The Reformed Church   | 1453-1648 A.D. |
| 1. In Switzerland  |                |
| H. The Reformed Church   |                |
| 1. In England  |                |
| I. The Modern Church   | 1648-1982      |
| 1. Take shape  |                |
| J. The Modern Church   |                |
| 1. Great Britain & Europe  |                |
| K. The Modern Church   |                |
| 1. American in the 18 <sup>th</sup> and 19 <sup>th</sup> Centuries |                |
| L. The Church in the 20 <sup>th</sup> Century                      |                |

## III. Background

- A. The Apostolic Church
  1. Ascension of Jesus
  2. Church is established in 2<sup>nd</sup> century from Euphrates to Tigris rivers and from Black Sea to River Nile
  3. God uses persecution to expand his church
  4. Ends with death of John
- B. The Persecuted Church
  1. 7 generations of Christian heroes stream to death in Roman Arenas
  2. Not crushed, church still grows

3. End with Edict of Constantine
- C. The Imperial Church
  1. Church becomes powerful
  2. Cross replaces Roman Eagle
  3. Roman headquarters moves to Constantinople
  4. Rome falls
  5. Church survives again
  6. Europe Christianized
- D. The Medieval Church
  1. Europe emerges from chaos
  2. Bishop of Rome becomes prominent
  3. Islam threatens
  4. The Crusades
  5. The Monastic Orders
  6. The time before the Reformation
- E. The Reformed Church
  1. Following the Enlightenment & the seeds of Humanism comes the Reformation
  2. Calvin, Luther, Zwingli & Co.
  3. The Counter Reformation
  4. Developments in Great Britain & Europe
- F. The Modern Church
  1. It takes shape in America, Britain & Europe
  2. America in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries
  3. The 20<sup>th</sup> century movements, revolutions, missions, para-church organizations.  
Rise of cults & liberalism
  4. Great Revivals
  5. Prospects for the future

#### **IV. Today's Lesson**

- A. The church is born
  1. Ascension precedes Pentecost & the birth of the church in A.D. 30
  2. 120 disciples know they are to be leaders
    - a. Given power & gifts to lead
    - b. Know Jesus is with them always
  3. Jerusalem Church is born
    - a. In Temple courts
    - b. Simon Peter, leader
    - c. John, the assistant
    - d. Apostles, governing board
  4. Theology simple & basic
    - a. Jesus is Messiah, repent, be baptized
  5. All witness
  6. Miracles & signs
  7. Daily worship & prayer
  8. Spirit led
  9. Generous in love & giving

10. The model church
  - a. But! Not missionary minded
11. Lasted 37 years
  - a. Until Jerusalem destroyed
- B. The Church moves out
  1. 15 year period finds church expanding over Europe
  2. Deacons elected to aid poor
  3. Story of Stephen
    - a. First Christian martyr
  4. Persecutions of Paul
  5. Philip (a layman) founds Samaritan Church, then one in Gaza, Joppa & Caesarea
- C. Formation of Antioch Church
  1. 300 miles from Jerusalem
  2. In modern Turkey, near Syrian border
  3. Gentile church
  4. Saul is converted
- D. Church expands into Gentile world
  1. Orthodox Jewish resentment begins
  2. Paul is persecuted severely
  3. Paul in Rome, preaches & writes letters
  4. Persecution under Nero
    - a. Brief but savage
  5. Much of what would become New Testament is now in circulation
- E. Church consolidates
  1. Acts of Apostles ends
  2. From death of Paul (A.D. 68) to death of John (A.D. 100) information is scant
  3. By 120 A.D., with writings of Church fathers, we have clearer picture
  4. Jerusalem destroyed by Romans in A.D. 70
    - a. Thousand of Jews killed & captured
  5. After 1300 years of life, Jewish State now ceases to exist
    - a. Not to be revived until 1948
  6. Within church, Jewish Christians became minority, turned bitter & inward
  7. Another cruel persecution Domitian
  8. John dies as outcast on the Isle of Patmos

## V. Concluding Remarks

- A. Christians now exist for 3 generations
- B. Church spreads even to Britain & India
- C. Membership several million
- D. Heretical beliefs & sects already arising
- E. Sacraments, worship, feasts, church life style outlined
- F. Church strong, vigorous & healthy, still growing
- G. Nothing will stop it now!

**ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND FOR TEACHERS**

1. SAUL'S USE OF MISFORTUNE VS. OURS-(note- not all background material this detailed) Paul's handicap- jail! Paul's decision for Christ was the most triumphant and exciting thing that ever happened to him, and yet faith led him down a trail of persecution for Christ that ended finally in a Roman jail. The cost to Paul in human terms was truly horrendous – his wife and family, friends and business associates, stature and prestige – all surrendered. The tragedy of his rejection to the Christians for several years, then finally the excitement of Barnabas' visit, and his call to be a pastor of the Antioch church! Then the journeys and the persecutions, stoning, of death, fear and fatigue, failure and sickness, then jail.

Many people say: "I could do good things for Christ if only I was here, or there, in this situation or that. But I am old, or sick, or confined – handicapped in some way." But look what Paul did with his handicap! He hardly even experienced it as a handicap, it was an opportunity! He was in Rome! He met the church people and strengthened them! He converted his jailers! He studied and wrote correspondence! He thought and contemplated the faith! He nurtured key church leaders! Like Jesus, Paul made better use of his own cross than any other tool at hand.

2. GOD'S USE OF TROUBLE TO BENEFIT HIS CHURCH. The growth of the Jerusalem church was truly phenomenal. Starting with 120 people, they received 3,000 new members on the day of Pentecost. God still added new members daily. Later we are told in Acts 4:4 the number had reached 5,000. Add the women who are not counted, and it must have been 11,000. By Acts 6, they must have numbered up to 25,000. As it spread into other cities it may well have reached 50,000 or a 100,00; 222% growth in 30 years!

What a high they must have been on! Nothing could stop them now! But then the cruel, ugly, meaningless persecutions began under Nero and Domitian! Had God abandoned them? Was He punishing them for sin? What did it mean?

Their faith might have ended at this point if it had not been solidly grounded theologically, etc.

3. A STUDY OF FOUR APOSTOLIC CHURCHES – Jerusalem, Antioch, Samaria, Joppa & Caesarea, Philippi, Thessalonica, Berea, Athens, Corinth, Ephesus, Colosse and Rome.
  - a. THE JERUSALEM CHURCH. Founded AD 30 with 120 members, it was the only church actually started by Jesus himself. They eventually founded churches all over the Roman Empire. In it the patterns of future church life were all shaped.

At Pentecost, membership grew to 3,000, but the church only lasted 37 years, to AD 70. It was long enough to do what God wanted.

1. It was evangelizing & baptizing
2. It stayed true to apostolic teaching
3. It emphasized fellowship

4. It ate together frequently
  5. It was a praying church. The entire church met to pray.
  6. It was a sharing, giving church (Acts 2:44, 45).  
Money was raised by selling property and pooling the funds, This was not communism, because Communism is a political force.
  7. It had a daily program of activities. (Acts 2:46,47)
  8. It practiced divine healing. (Acts 3:16 & 5:16)
  9. It witnessed boldly. (Acts 4:31)
  10. It was a teaching church. (Acts 5:25)
  11. It was a voting church. (Acts 6:3, 5-7) The Deacons were elected by the church and ordained by the Apostles.
  12. The Elders provided spiritual leadership.
- b. THE ANTIOCH CHURCH Located in Turkey near the Syrian border. Antioch was at one time the third largest city in the Roman Empire. It was a cosmopolitan city located on a busy highway. Today it is only a country town, where the infamous groves of Daphne may still be seen. The church was founded by some unknown Christian who witnessed for Christ in the Jewish Synagogue. The Apostles heard of it, and sent Barnabas as its first Pastor. After 8 years of exile, Paul came to assist Barnabas and soon outshone him in missionary zeal.
1. It was here that Christians were first called by this name – little Christs. Up until now there were called Nazarenes, or people of the way.
  2. It was the first mixed church, of Jews and Gentiles.
  3. It was the first church outside Palestine to be charitable, sending generous funds to help the Jerusalem church when Christian Jews lost everything at their conversions.
  4. It was the first missionary church.
- c. THE SAMARIAN CHURCH. After Jerusalem, Samaria was the next large area, and Jesus had mentioned it, “ Be witnesses unto Me in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria.” Remember too how the Jews hated Samaria. The story is found in Acts 8.
1. This church was started by a layman with guidance from the Apostles. Christianity does not depend upon Pastors to do all the work of the church. Dedicated laymen can do much more, because there are more laymen than Pastors.
  2. Philip preached: “The things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ.” Acts 8:12
  3. The gospel in Samaria ended the division between men and women – both were baptized (v. 12) This was a significant break with Judaism.
  4. The Holy Spirit came upon the followers (v. 17) (The Jews had considered these people to be mongrels).
  5. The gifts of God were to be freely given and never put on sale. (Read about Simon the Sorcerer, vs. 21, 23.)
- d. THE PHILIPPIAN CHURCH. The first European house church meeting in the home of Lydia (v. 15)
1. This church practiced immediate baptism, but it was not without instruction.

2. It crossed over all social lines – Lydia and the jailer became Christian brother and sister. Perhaps even slaves were included in both households.
3. This church was continually generous. (II Cor. 11:9, Phil. 1:7).
4. It was a self-perpetuating church, which produced many strong Christians: had its own Bishops and Deacons, Epaphroditus, who was a help to Paul, and Clement, who later became a leading Pastor in Rome.
5. But it was not without conflict, between two prominent women, Euodias and Syntyche. (Phil 4:2)

**EXAMINATION QUESTIONS:**

1. Give three reasons for studying church history.

**ANSWER:** To know our spiritual roots – To see how the church handled conflict and division – to gain a new awareness of the power of evil – To realize the church is our spiritual mother – To see how the Master is still at work in our world today.

2. Name the six periods of church history.

**ANSWER:** The Apostolic Church – The Persecuted Church – The Imperial Church – The Medieval Church – The Reformed Church – The Modern Church.

3. What event begins the story of the Church?

**ANSWER:** The Ascension of Christ.

4. What event begins the church's worldwide mission?

**ANSWER:** Pentecost.

5. How many members did the Pentecost church have?

**ANSWER:** 120

6. When did St. John die?

**ANSWER:** 100 A.D.

7. What was the name of the Roman Emperor who ended the first persecution?

**ANSWER:** Constantine

8. What religious organization almost destroyed Paul's new work?

**ANSWER:** Judaizers.

9. What year did Pentecost happen?

**ANSWER:** Approximately 30 A.D.

10. What three new things happened at Pentecost?

**ANSWER:** The Christian suddenly understood that they were to be the leaders of the new church that would be in the world, not of it. – They suddenly felt within them power and courage sufficient for this tremendous task. – They knew that the Holy Spirit would always abide with them to provide the leadership and encouragement they had known in Jesus.

11. What two churches were most prominent during the Apostolic Period?

**ANSWER:** The Jerusalem and Antioch churches.

12. What church launched the Apostle Paul?

**ANSWER:** Antioch Church.

13. Who befriended Paul?

**ANSWER:** Barnabas.

14. Where did the Jerusalem church meet?

**ANSWER:** The Upper Room on Mt. Zion and Solomon's Porch in the Temple.

15. Name four characteristics of the Jerusalem church.

**ANSWER:** Members were part of small community – All were filled with the holy Spirit – Expected a speedy return of Christ – Met daily for worship & Prayer – All witnessed, all preached – Ate Together – Generous – They were lead by the Apostles – Membership was voluntary – Ministry of miracles.

16. State in your own words the significance of the fifteen year period from the death of Stephen to the Council of Jerusalem?

**ANSWER:** Period opens with the church unaware of missionary mandate and closes with missionary explosion.

17. What decision was made by the Council of Jerusalem?

**ANSWER:** To open membership to the Gentiles without requiring them first to become Jews.

18. Name two others who founded churches.

**ANSWER:** Peter and Philip.

19. In what major way was the Antioch church different from the Jerusalem church?

**ANSWER:** The Antioch church was made up of Gentiles with no Jewish background.

20. Who became the second leader of the Jerusalem church?

**ANSWER:** James.

21. Name two letters Paul wrote from Rome.

**ANSWER:** Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, or Philemon.

22. What Roman Emperor began the first persecution of the church? Why?

**ANSWER:** Nero, claimed the Christians had set fire to Rome.

23. Who died during this persecution?

**ANSWER:** Paul and Peter.

24. In what year was Jerusalem destroyed? Why?

**ANSWER:** 70 A.D., the Jews broke out in open revolt against Rome.

25. How was it that most Christians escaped?

**ANSWER:** They heeded the prophetic words of Jesus in Matt. 24 and fled the City.

26. What became of the original Jewish Christians?

**ANSWER:** They shriveled in numbers after the fall of Jerusalem, clinging to Jewish customs, they were hardly recognized by the Gentile Christians and despised by their race. They formed the sect called Ebionites, who rejected the Council of Jerusalem and Paul's Writings and the new Gentile converts.

27. At the end of this period how many members did the church have?

**ANSWER:** Several Million

28. How far had the church spread?

**ANSWER:** In every land and almost every city from the Black Sea to Northern Africa & may be as far as Spain & Great Britain.

29. Describe worship in an early Christian church.

**ANSWER:** Baptism was the rite of admission to membership, worship shifted from Saturday to Sunday, the Lord's Supper was observed, Psalms were changed, some hymns were sung, portions of the New Testament were read, prayers were spontaneous and sermons were given by Elders and visitors.

30. What happened to spiritual vitality at the close of this period?

**ANSWER:** It seemed lower than it had under the inspired leadership of The Apostles.

**PREVIEW NEXT LESSON AND ASSIGN READING.**