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### Pax Romana

- “Cradle of Christianity”
  - Common Language – Greek and Latin
  - Infrastructure for transportation and trade
  - Military Stability
- The Church thrived for 30 years under the protective umbrella of Judaism
  - Rome allowed for “lawful religion” (religio licita)
- The Church grew at a rate of 40% each decade
  - A.D. 40 – 1000 (<1% of total population of Roman Empire)
  - A.D. 350 – 34 Million (over 50% of the population)

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2

### Persecution

- Accused of Cannibalism because of the Eucharist
- Incest (“brothers” and “sisters” greeting with holy kiss)
- Atheism (only worshiped Jesus and not the civic gods) – Christians were called “enemies of humanity”
- A.D. 64 and the Great Fire of Rome. Nero blamed the Christians.
- Large numbers of Christians suffered under the maniac, Nero
- Decius (A.D. 250) and Valarian (A.D. 257-258) – Required sacrifice to state gods and forbade Christians to gather for worship
- Diocletian and Galerius (A.D. 303-313) sought to destroy Christianity. This was referred to as the Great Persecution

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3

### The Age of Constantine

- Constantine Converted to Christianity in A.D.312.
  - Wanted to seek divine help in battle, but which god?
  - Had a vision of a shining Chi Rho “*in hoc signo vinces*”
  - He had a cross (Chi Rho) of gold and precious stones made and had it carried at the front of his armies into battle
  - He was victorious in battle and attributed that victory to his conversion
- Edict of Milan in A.D.313
  - Ended persecution by the state
  - Allowed for religious freedom

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4

### Edict of Milan

- Clergy exempt from public obligations: taxes, military service, manual labor. *Some entered the ministry to avoid paying taxes*
- Christians “reimbursed” from imperial treasury for previous persecutions.
- Church received grants of money and soon became wealthy with extensive land holdings. *By the Middle Ages, the Church owned as much as 40% of all land in Christian Europe.*
- Clergy received fixed income from the state. *Often, rather than freeing clergy to focus on their office, it led to an appetite for luxury and virtually stopped the exercise of free giving among the people.*

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5

### Unintended Consequences

- Christianity became a matter of fashion and hypocrisy increased. If you weren't a Christian, you could not get ahead.
- Many undesirables entered the ministry to take advantage of state funding.
- Syncretistic worship. Mixing pagan practices with Christianity
- In matters of Church:
  - Confusion over who had the final say in theological disputes
  - Difficulty in maintaining her prophetic witness in culture
  - Temptations to use the military might of state to enforce personal agendas

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6

"The difference between the age after Constantine and the age before consists, therefore, not at all in the cessation of true Christianity and the entrance of false, but in the preponderance of the one over the other. The field of the church was now much larger, but with much good soil it included far more that was stony, barren, and overgrown with weeds. The line between church and world, between regenerate and unregenerate, between those who were Christians in name and those who were Christians in heart, was more or less obliterated, and in place of the former hostility between the two parties there came a fusion of them in the same outward communion of baptism and confession."

- Philip Schaff, History of the Christian Church, vol 3

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7

### The Rise of Christianity

- Many Christians believed the millennial kingdom had arrived.
- Moved from 6 million to 34 million Christians in 37 years (Between A.D. 300 and 337)
- Attention could now be turned to developing Theology and addressing error.

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9

### The Origin of the Papacy

- Bishop/overseer (episkopos) and elder (presbuteros) are used synonymously in the NT (Acts 20:17 & 28; Titus 1:5 & 7; I Timothy 3:1 and 5:17)
- Paul established these pastoral leaders to care for the spiritual needs of the body in each place where a church was planted

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10

### The Origin of the Papacy

- Four men influenced a move to a supreme bishop.
- **Ignatius** (d. A.D. 108 Antioch) made a distinction between the elder and bishop and gave more authority to the office of bishop. He did **not** affirm however that the bishop was in direct succession from the apostles.
- **Clement of Rome** (d. A.D. 100) does not distinguish between elder and overseer but affirms the doctrine of apostolic succession and claims their authority is from the apostles.
- **Irenaeus** (d. A.D. 200) increased the power of the monarchial bishop by merging Ignatius' and Clement's ideas.
- **Cyprian** (d. A.D. 258) said "The bishop is in the Church and the Church in the bishop and if anyone is not with the bishop he is not with the Church."

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11

### Reasons for Centralized Authority

- Natural tendency for one person to rise as the primary leader.
- A desire for a tangible outward expression of connection between the people and God
- The uneasiness and insecurity that developed after the death of the first apostles.
- Centralize the church's authority and instruction in view of the rapid growth after 313
- Widespread heresy called for a single voice from within the church to uphold the truth.

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12

### The Birth of the Papacy

- Cyprian and others supported the idea of a local monarchial bishop, however he refused to acknowledge any one bishop over all other bishops. (Jerusalem - sacked in A.D 70, Antioch, Alexandria, Constantinople, and Rome)
- Rome was given honorary status as "first among equals"
  - Population (the Mega Church)
  - Wealth and Influence

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13

### The Birth of the Papacy

- The universal authority of the Roman papacy was not claimed officially until mid 5<sup>th</sup> century.
- Leo I preaches a message from Matthew 16:17-19
  - Peter is the bedrock of the Church
  - Peter's apostolic authority lives on in the Roman Bishop
- Leo I faces Attila the Hun - He saves Rome from destruction.
- Leo I faces Gaiseric, the Vandal King, at the gates of Rome - He "saves" Rome from destruction.

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14

### Medieval Reform Movements

- Attempts to reform of the Church during the middle ages.
  - Monastic Reform movement
  - The Waldenses formed by Peter Waldo in Eastern France (12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> c.)
  - John Wycliffe (late 14<sup>th</sup> c.) - Oxford professor, Translated the NT (1382) and the OT (1384) into English

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15

### Medieval Reform Movements

- Attempts to reform of the Church during the middle ages.
- John Hus (15<sup>th</sup> Century) - Influenced by Wycliffe's views and sought to implement Wycliffe's reforms. He was eventually burned at the stake in 1415.
- Savonarola (1452 - 1498) Dominican Monk in Florence fought for reform within the church. Eventually arrested, tortured, hung to death then burned.
- Martin Luther and the 95 Theses (A.D. 1517)

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16

### Martin Luther

- “St. Anne, save me! And I'll become a monk.”
- Luther had a hyper scrupulousness regarding his sin. Racked with guilt he spent long hours in the confessional and in penance.
- Assigned to the chair of Biblical Studies at Wittenberg University
- “My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?” How could perfect Jesus be forsaken by God?
- Romans 1:17 – “For therein is the righteousness of God revealed from faith to faith, for it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

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17

Night and day I pondered until I saw the connection between the justice of God and the statement that ‘the just shall live by faith.’ Then I grasped that the justice of God is that righteousness by which though grace and sheer mercy God justifies us through faith. Thereupon I felt myself to be reborn and to have gone through open doors into paradise.”

Martin Luther, 1515

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18

If salvation comes through faith in Christ alone, the intercession of priests is superfluous. Faith formed and nurtured by the Word of God, written and preached, requires no monks, no masses, no prayers to the saints. The mediation of the Church of Rome crumbles into insignificance.

Bruce Shelley, *Church History in Plain Language* p.240

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19

### The Fire Is Lit

- John Tetzel - Dominican Priest selling indulgences to finance St. Peter's basilica.
- "As soon as the coin in the coffer rings, the soul from purgatory springs."
- Luther believed that this practice of selling indulgences was dangerous because it gave individuals false hope.

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20

### The Fire Is Lit

- Following a university custom Luther nailed the 95 theses to the door of the Wittenberg Church to begin a debate.
- Tetzel denounced him as a man guilty of preaching dangerous doctrine
- Luther began to insist on Scriptural proof of his theological error. The Reformation fire was lit.

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21

### We Hold in Common

- One Bible in Two Testaments (66 books -39 OT and 27 NT)
- Three Creeds
  - Apostles Creed (A.D. 150) Against Gnosticism & Marcionism
  - Nicene Creed (A.D. 326) Deity of Christ
  - Athanasian Creed (A.D. 428) Trinity and Incarnation
- Four Councils
  - First Nicea (A.D. 325) Jesus is one substance with the Father
  - First Constantinople (A.D. 381) Affirmed the divinity of the Holy Spirit
  - Ephesus (A.D. 431) Jesus is divine AND born of a woman (*theotokos*) "bearer of God"
  - Chalcedon (A.D. 451) Two Natures in Christ: divine and human
- Five centuries of faith from the Apostolic era to the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> Century (Leo I identifies himself as supreme authority in the Church)

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22

### Doctrinal Agreement

- Revelation:** God made himself knowable and known
  - General Revelation – Nature (*Rom 1:19-20; 2:14-15*)
  - Special Revelation – Scripture (*1 Tim 3:16-17*)
- God (Theology Proper)**
  - God as Trinity
  - God as Creator
  - Gods Attributes (Incommunicable and Communicable)
- Humanity (Anthropology)**
  - Origin – Adam and Eve are not myth or allegory
  - Sin (*Though differences exist regarding the extent of the effects of sin*)

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23

### Doctrinal Agreement

- Christ (Christology)**
  - His deity
  - His humanity
  - His bodily resurrection
- Salvation (Soteriology) – with some exceptions**
  - God acted in history through Jesus Christ to save man.
  - Through Jesus we are delivered from sin and its consequences.
  - We hope for our future glorification with Jesus Christ in his coming kingdom
  - Initial justification by God's grace. Catholic and Reformed individuals mean different things by "grace alone." Reformed theology teaches *sola gratia & sola fide*.

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24

### The Protestant Reformation

- Salvation was by grace alone through faith in Christ alone – *Sola Gratia / Sola Fide*
- By calling on the name of Christ alone – *Solus Christus*
- The Scriptures alone, not popes nor councils, are the standard for Christian faith – *Sola Scriptura*
- All for the glory of God alone – *Soli Deo Gloria*

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25

### Significant Differences

- Source of Authority – Scripture Alone vs Tradition & Scripture
- Means of Salvation – Grace Alone vs Grace + Works
- Ordinances vs Sacraments
- Priesthood of all Believers vs Saints and veneration of Mary
- Church Leadership and Ecclesiastical Authority

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