



The Sanctuary Institute

The Sanctuary Ministries



The Sanctuary Institute





*This is the Intellectual Property of
The Sanctuary Ministries.*

*The intellectual content of this work
belongs to the author. It cannot be sold or
transferred. It is an intellectual
category must be respected in
all activities.*



Week 2

The Persecution of the Early Church

- The Christian church underwent systematic persecution at the hands of Roman government in its early years.
- The persecutions of the early Church initiated partly in selfishness and superstition, and the persecution was erratic, concerted, and dependent on the political climate and temperament of each emperor.
- Under Emperor Valerian, who took the throne in 253, the Roman Empire was filled with horror and suffering.
- In 257 edicts, the punishment for believing in the new Gospel was exile.
- Then in 258 an edict announced the punishment was death.
- The persecution ended with his capture by Persia and he ended his days in Persia in shameful captivity.

The Rise of the Papacy

- Flavius Valerius Aurelius Constantinus was the first Christian ruler of the Roman Empire
- Constantine, I came to the throne when his father, Constantius, died in 306.
- After defeating his rivals, Constantine became the sole ruler of the Roman Empire in 324,
- He credited with social and economic reforms that significantly influenced medieval society.
- In 313 his Edict of Milan legally ended pagan persecution of Christians, and in 325 he used imperial power to bring unity to the church at the Council of Nicaea.

The conversion of Constantine

- The bishop Eusebius reported that God intervened in the life of the Emperor and the progression of history.
- Constantine and his army was in route to Rome in an attempt to fight against a political rival and encountered a strange phenomenon, a cross of light and the words, “by this sign you will be victory” in broad daylight.
- The next night, according to Eusebius, after the encounter Constantine was commanded in a dream to put “the heavenly sign” on his soldiers’ shields.
- He attributed the victory to the power of the “God of the Christians”, and he committed himself to the Christian Faith from that day on.
- Although his knowledge of the faith was said to be insincere and political, nevertheless, it proved to be beneficial as it marked the end of persecution, as the early Church knew it.



THE BARBARIAN INVASION

- Beginning in the fifth century, Rome found itself being attacked by numerous external powers.
- Rome was attacked by the Lombards and Goths, and then in A.D. 452 when the Huns set out to “Conquer Constantinople” they were diverted to Italy.
- **Leo the Great set out to meet** “The Scourge of God” and either through negotiations, or through some miracle, Attila decided not to attack Rome.
- The continual assaults by the countless groups and limited or sometimes lack of response by Constantinople were major contributing influences in the pope acquiring power in Rome.
- There were two typical approaches to the defense of Rome, either a posturing of strength, or paying off the attacking force, as was practiced by Pope Pelagius II.
- The Roman army succeeded in holding off the barbarians until about the third century but eventually Rome succumb to the barbarian invasions and this was the final piece in how the papacy excelled in power.
- In 455 AD the Vandals destroyed Rome and the last Roman emperor was overthrown in 476 AD, leaving the Roman Empire in desolation, and leaving the church to restore order.
- Amid the fall of Rome the benefits of papacy could be immediately seen, as the church administered medical care and took care of the needy.
- If had not been for the Church intervening with social programs, Rome would have been in ruins.
- After the fall of Rome, the papacy served as authority over the people.
- The Church of Rome would be the responsibility of the Chief Apostle, which was Peter.
- He was the first bishop and that won much popularity within the community.
- And to give Him more influence, Matthew 16:18 was used to increase his authority,

“And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock, I will build My church, and the forces of Hades will not overpower it.”

- Peter’s initial name was Simon and Jesus renamed Him, Cephas, which is an Aramaic word meaning “rock”.
- Therefore, this scripture was interpreted to mean that Jesus was teaching that Peter would be the foundation (rock), of the Church and this interpretation resulted in leveraging the power of the papacy.
- The church laws became universal, and the bishop of Rome was recognized as authority and supreme.
- The papacy denotes more to the centralized government within the church implemented by the Pope rather than just an office.
- “Popes between 300 and 700 AD built two fundamentally new structures.
 - One was the framework from which all later generations of popes drew in defining their office and its mission.
 - The other was the institutional structure upon which virtually all elements of the later papal government were eventually erected.
- The Roman Empire dominated much of the western nation up until the Reformation.
- It extended from France to Hungary and from the Baltic Sea to the Mediterranean.
- The Empire maintained two separate principal ideas, which divided it in two major segments, the Greek Church and the Latin Church.



THE GREAT SCHICSM

- The split resulted in a SCHICSM.
- The head authority in the Latin Church was the Pope, and he claimed both temporal and spiritual power.
- There were many positive benefits that these nations experienced; conversely it also brought many devastating consequences.
- There was not a Roman Emperor who ever had such power as the Pope.
- The Church was well-organized rich and possessed great influence with many functions.
- Pope Gregory died in 1379 and Urban VI was elected, while the French elected Clement VII.
- This led to a split, as some supported one Pope, and others would support the other Pope.
- The Council of Pisa in 1409 tried to settle this by electing a third Pope, but in reality, they hurt the power of Rome.
- The people began to see the wealth of the Roman church and began to scrutinize how they were obtaining their wealth; furthermore, they wanted a share of the wealth.
- Another factor was the strict rules and regulations put forth by the church was not placed on the immoral clergy but was demanded of the people.
- This would operate as the leading factor in the upcoming reformation.
- The Latin Church created a comprehensive, effective system of belief, in which the papacy gave the Word to man from the King.
- No one else was allowed to read the Word of God, which gave the papacy much power.
- In the early 1300's the leadership started to be put into question
- Especially when Pope Boniface VIII made the bold and arrogant statement that, "We declare state, define, and pronounce that for every human creature to be subject to the Roman pope is altogether necessary for salvation."
- The outrage that ensued after this was significant.
- It fueled the "papal schism."
- The Crusades contributed greatly to the negativity of the papacy.
- These events were considered immoral and not of God.
- They were very deadly.
- The holy wars strengthened the Church by increasing the wealth; they brought back spices, perfumes, silk, and jewelry during these wars and many lives were lost.
- A positive influence concerning the rise of papacy was Monasticism.
- Before the 6th century the monastery lifestyle became very popular.
 - Western civilization would not exist as it is, if it were not for the monks as they were influential in the preserving the arts, agriculture and education.
- The papacy dominated much of the Western nations throughout the Middle Ages until the Reformation.
- One of the benefits was that with the increase of power of the papacy there was an increase of the Good News Gospel across the developing world.
- However, the disadvantage of this benefit is that the distorted political system of the Roman Catholic Church intermingled within the Christian faith.
- The Roman Catholic Church taught and practiced many ideas that were contrary to Scripture.



- It was very heretical to the nature of the Gospel.
- These beliefs were the major teachings of the Church, and were the teachings being followed by most of the “Christians” in the West.
- The Church taught many false ideas about the authority of the Pope and the authority of the Church.
- This compromised the authority of the Scripture, which is to be able to make the man of God “perfect, equipped for every good work.” (2 Timothy 3:17)
- The Bible prophesied many centuries earlier that the time would come when men would think to *change times and laws* (Daniel 7:25).

The Deconstruction of God’s Appointed Times

- Council of Nicaea the first ecumenical council of the Christian church, meeting in ancient Nicaea now modern-day Turkey 325 AD.
- Nicaea was located in Asia Minor, east of Constantinople.
- It was called by the emperor Constantine I, an unbaptized catechumen, or neophyte, who presided over the opening session and took part in the discussions.
- At the Council of Nicaea, Emperor Constantine presided over a group of church bishops and other leaders with the purpose of defining the nature of God for all of Christianity and eliminating confusion, controversy, and contention within the church.
- Constantine felt “called” to use his authority to help bring about unity, peace, and love within the church.
- The Council of Nicaea overwhelmingly affirmed the deity and eternity of Jesus Christ and defined the relationship between the Father and the Son as “of one substance.”
- It also affirmed the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit were listed as three co-equal and co-eternal Persons.
- And declared Easter to occur after the first full moon of the Spring Equinox.

The Watering Down of the Sabbath

- The Christians during the apostolic era, from about 35 to 100 A.D., kept Sabbath on the designated seventh day of the week.
- For the first 300 years of Christian history, when the Roman emperors regarded themselves as gods, Christianity became an “illegal religion,” and God’s people were scattered abroad ([Acts 8:1](#)).

Constantine Made Sunday a Civil Rest Day

- Constantine was a [sun worshiper](#) during the first years of his reign.
- Later, he professed conversion to Christianity, but at heart remained a devotee of the sun.
- Edward Gibbon says, “The Sun was universally celebrated as the invincible guide and protector of Constantine.”¹
- Chamber’s Encyclopedia says that Constantine created the earliest Sunday law known to history in AD 321. It says this:

On the venerable Day of the sun let the magistrates and people residing in cities rest, and let all workshops be closed. In the country, however, persons engaged in agriculture may freely and lawfully continue their pursuits: because it often happens that another Day is not so suitable for grain sowing or for vine planting: lest by neglecting the proper moment for such operations the bounty of heaven should be lost.



The Sanctuary Institute

- Close on the heels of the Edict of Constantine followed the Catholic Church Council of Laodicea (circa 364 AD) which says:

Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday (Sabbath), but shall work on that Day: but the Lord's Day, they shall especially honour; and as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ.^{iv}

- The Sunday law was officially confirmed by the Roman Papacy.
- The 2nd Council of Laodicea was held in AD 364 and is considered a minor convention in historical Christianity.
- The city of Laodicea is in the southwestern part of modern-day Turkey and is mentioned as one of the seven churches of the book of Revelation (Revelation 3:14–15).
- The Council of Laodicea produced sixty rulings, or canons, covering a broad range of topics.

The council also produced two rulings referencing the canon of Scripture.

- The 59th ruling of the Council of Laodicea declared that only canonical books should be read in church.
 - The 60th ruling specified this canon as the traditional 27 books of the New Testament, minus Revelation.
- The Council of Laodicea in A.D. 364 decreed,

“Christians shall not Judaize and be idle on Saturday but shall work on that day; but the Lord’s day they shall especially honour, and, as being Christians, shall, if possible, do no work on that day. If, however, they are found Judaizing, they shall be shut out from Christ.”

Tradition Of Men

- *"Tradition" in the Bible does not mean exactly what many people think.*
- "Tradition" is currently defined: "the handing down of statements, beliefs ... from generation to generation..."
- In theology, it especially refers to teachings handed down from past generations but not written in the Bible. (*Random House College Dictionary*)
- "Tradition" in the Bible means: "a giving over which is done by word of mouth or in writing ... by instruction, narrative, precept, etc" - Grimm-Wilke-Thayer.
- Some are found in scripture and some are not.
- The Catholic Church binds this as doctrine:

"Do we get from the Bible alone all our knowledge and certainty about what God has told us? No, there is also Sacred Tradition.... What is tradition? The Word of God handed on to us by the Apostles in their preaching and by their successors in the church to the present day Do you have to believe in tradition? Yes.... we are obliged to accept all the truths contained in the Bible and Tradition..." - Catechism, pp. 9,10.

- The Catholic Church, says "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture make up a single sacred deposit of the Word of God..... "
- They admit that these traditions are not found in the Bible.
- In practice, "tradition" is the practice of the church through the years: human tradition not found in Scripture.
- Christians should be neither "traditional" nor "non-traditional" regarding our past practices.
- You must know what teachings or practices are referred to and what their source is.



The Sanctuary Institute

What does the Bible say about such traditions?

- The Pharisees had many traditions about washing (Mark 7:3,4,8).
- They had received these traditions from the elders or fathers (Mark 7:3,5).
- They "found fault" (Mark 7 vv 2,5) with Jesus' disciples for not washing their hands before eating. *Mark 7:1-13 (Matt. 15:1-14)*
- Jesus rebuked them, because their traditions freed them from obeying Divine commands, such as caring for elderly parents (Mark 7: 9-11).
 - So, Jesus said they laid aside God's commands (v8), rejected His commands (v9), and made Gods word of no effect (v13). They did this because they followed traditions of men (v8), human tradition (vv 9,13) and taught as doctrine the commands of men (v7).
- The problem was they followed traditions that were human in origin that differed from God's teaching.
- Since the Bible reveals everything, God has ordained, any practice not revealed in the gospelmust be human in origin.

Colossians 2:8: Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers[a] of this world, rather than from Christ.

1 Timothy 4:2-4: Preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching but having itching ears, they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths





