

The Early Christian Church

A survey of the CHRISTIAN from the ascension of JESUS to Post-Modernity.

Goals: To provide a background and scope of the evolution and development of the CHRISTIAN Church with the purpose of its existence.

Who should attend: Anyone interested in the beginning, growth and development of Christianity.

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Heresies

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Course Outline

I. The Language – What was that?

In addition to **Aramaic and Hebrew, Greek and Latin** were also common in JESUS' time. After Alexander the Great's conquest of Mesopotamia and the rest of the Persian Empire in the fourth century B.C., Greek supplanted other tongues as the official language in much of the region. JESUS spoke Aramaic.

II. The Geography – Where were they and where did they go?

III. The People – Who was there?

IV. Non-ecumenical Councils – “Just us”

V. Ecumenical Councils – Let's stay on track

VI. The East/West Split – Where does the SPIRIT come from?

VII. The Corruption of the Western See – Show me the money

VIII. The great Protest – It started as a noble idea

IX. Rome's Fall and the rise of Europe – Is this the whole world?

X. Modernism and Post-Modernism – Where are we now?

- Heresy –
- a. belief or opinion contrary to orthodox religious (especially Christian) doctrine.
 - b. opinion profoundly at odds with what is generally accepted.

There has always been heresy. The first instance of it is found in Genesis 3:1.

Genesis 3:2 Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Has God indeed said, 'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"

2 And the woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit of the trees of the garden;

*3 but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God has said, 'You shall not eat it, **nor shall you touch it, lest you die.**' "*

4 Then the serpent said to the woman, "You will not surely die.

5 For God knows that in the day you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil."

But what GOD said was:

Genesis 2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat;

*17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, **for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.**"*

The purpose of heresy is to cause a destruction of the relationships (broken fellowship) of:

- a. GOD with mankind, and,
- b. Mankind with mankind.

The enemy wants to destroy our fellowship because of his hatred and envy due to GOD's love for us.

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

At the core of broken fellowship is greed and the myth of scarcity.

Genesis 4:1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, "I have acquired a man from the LORD."

2 Then she bore again, this time his brother Abel. Now Abel was a keeper

of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.

3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD.

4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering,

5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell.

6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?"

7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door. And its desire is for you, but you should rule over it."

There was and there is no scarcity of resources!

The enemy believed and wants us to believe that there is not enough (of love or natural resources) for all of us, therefore we allow the enemy to do his primary task, namely....

John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have *it* more abundantly.

There was additional heresies in the Old Testament, to wit:

Jeremiah 8:8 "How can you say, 'We are wise, And the law of the LORD is with us'? Look, the false pen of the scribe certainly works falsehood.

Jeremiah 14:14 And the LORD said to me, "The prophets prophesy lies in My name. I have not sent them, commanded them, nor spoken to them; they prophesy to you a false vision, divination, a worthless thing, and the deceit of their heart.

Jeremiah 23:32 Behold, I am against those who prophesy false dreams," says the LORD, "and tell them, and cause My people to err by their lies and by their recklessness. Yet I did not send them or command them; therefore they shall not profit this people at all," says the LORD.

There was a distinct response in the Old Testament with regard to heresies, to wit:

Deuteronomy 13:1 *"If there arises among you a prophet or a dreamer of dreams, and he gives you a sign or a wonder,*

2 and the sign or the wonder comes to pass, of which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods'—which you have not known—and let us serve them,'

3 you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams, for the LORD your God is testing you to know whether you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.

4 You shall walk after the LORD your God and fear Him, and keep His commandments and obey His voice; you shall serve Him and hold fast to Him.

5 **But that prophet or that dreamer of dreams shall be put to death**, because he has spoken in order to turn you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt and redeemed you from the house of bondage, to entice you from the way in which the LORD your God commanded you to walk. So you shall put away the evil from your midst.

6 **"If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul,** secretly entices you, saying, 'Let us go and serve other gods,' which you have not known, neither you nor your fathers,

7 of the gods of the people which are all around you, near to you or far off from you, from one end of the earth to the other end of the earth,

8 **you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him;**

9 **but you shall surely kill him; your hand shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people.**

10 **And you shall stone him with stones until he dies**, because he sought to entice you away from the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

11 So all Israel shall hear and fear, and not again do such wickedness as this among you.

12 **"If you hear someone in one of your cities, which the LORD your God gives you to dwell in, saying,**

13 **'Corrupt men have gone out from among you and enticed the inhabitants of their city, saying, "Let us go and serve other gods"'**—which you have not known—

14 **then you shall inquire, search out, and ask diligently. And if it is indeed true and certain that such an abomination was committed among you,**

15 **you shall surely strike the inhabitants of that city with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying it, all that is in it and its livestock—with the edge of the sword.**

16 And you shall gather all its plunder into the middle of the street, and completely burn with fire the city and all its plunder, for the LORD your God. It shall be a heap forever; it shall not be built again.

17 So none of the accursed things shall remain in your hand, *that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of His anger and show you mercy, have compassion on you and multiply you, just as He swore to your fathers,*

18 because you have listened to the voice of the LORD your God, to keep all His commandments which I command you today, to do what is right in the eyes of the LORD your God.

There are three primary goals of heresy:

- 1. Breaking of fellowship with the true GOD,**
- 2. Power of you, and,**
- 3. Money.**

Trinitarian/Christological Heresies

The First Heresyⁱ

Heresy – Judaizersⁱⁱ sought to require Gentile Christians to be circumcised and to continue to obey The Law. [See Acts 15:1]

Description – Jews were commanded to be circumcised to maintain Abraham's covenant with GOD, forever!. Later this understanding included The Passover and all other feasts/festivals which came after.

Origin

Background – Genesis 17:9-14, Exodus 3:15, 12:1-24

Official Condemnation

Deuteronomy 10:16, 30:6 [Circumcision of the Hearts]

Romans 2:12-29 [The Law vs. Grace]

Matthew 5:17-20 [Fulfillment not destruction]

Other

It is obvious that GOD was more interested in cutting the heart and not the foreskin. This is the purpose of the fulfillment of The Law [grace] that the resurrection of CHRIST represents to us who believe.

[Romans 8:28-30]

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- ⁱHeresy: 1. opinion or doctrine **at variance** with the orthodox or accepted doctrine, especially of a church or religious system.
 2. any belief or theory that is strongly **at variance** with established beliefs, customs, etc

at variance,

1. **(of things) in a state of difference or disagreement.**
2. (of persons) in a state of controversy or dissension:
- 2.

ⁱⁱ Judaizer – Jews who accepted CHRIST as Messiah and who still adhere to Mosaic Law requirements.